



Trustees' Annual Report

1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023

MEET in Oxford provides a low-cost trauma focused therapy service using fully qualified and experienced psychotherapists. We offer the trauma therapies known as EMDR and Energy Psychotherapy to people whose lives are seriously affected now by difficult experiences in the past and who are unable to pay the usual fees for private therapy or access it through the NHS.

MEET in Oxford was founded by three members of Oxford Quaker Meeting and is financially supported by the Quaker Meeting through provision of free counselling space and office facilities. It was formally adopted as a concern of the Meeting in July 2018.

Constitution and current trustees

MEET in Oxford ("MEET") was constituted as a small charity in June 2014 and registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), charity number 1182200 in 2019.

- The charity's registered address is: 43 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LW.
- The charity's governing document is the Constitution of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered on 25th February 2019.
- Significant decisions affecting the charity are made at the quarterly trustee meetings when a quorum is present or in writing agreed by a majority of the trustees.

Trustees of the charity for the year were:

Nancy Browner (Chair from July 2022), Sandra Figgess (Chair to July 2022), Jane Fisher, Katharine Nicholas (Safeguarding Officer), Karen Stowe (to January 2023), Michael Taylor (Treasurer), Kate Moberly (from October 2022), Jo Black (from January 2023)

- All the trustees acted for the whole year except:
 - Kate Moberly joined the trustees in October 2022. Kate is on the management group that meets weekly. She is an EMDR consultant and runs the monthly peer supervision groups for MEET in Oxford's EMDR therapists.
 - Jo Black joined the trustees in January 2023. She is a therapist who lives and works in Oxfordshire.
 - Karen Stowe resigned as a trustee in January 2023, before taking up the post of Clinical Lead with MEET in Oxford in February 2023.
- At the AGM (July 2022), Sandra Figgess stepped down as Chair of the Trustees. Nancy Browner was elected as the new Chair. Sandra was warmly thanked by the trustees for her many years of work leading MEET in Oxford as one of its founders and the first Chair of Trustees.
- Trustees are appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a meeting of the trustees.
- The trustees meet quarterly.
- The trustee body includes: two of the founders of MEET in Oxford; five psychotherapists working in different modalities, of whom two work with MEET in Oxford clients and one is a

UKCP supervisor and course leader at the Minster Centre; a past client of MEET in Oxford; a solicitor specialising in mental health; a past director of Christian Aid.

Objectives

The object of the charity under its Constitution is:

To relieve the mental distress of persons resident in Oxfordshire who are suffering from the effects of traumatic experiences by the provision of the trauma focused therapies known as EMDR and the energy psychotherapies with priority given to persons of limited means by way of free or subsidised treatment.

The trustees meet this object, having regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit, by:

- providing trauma focused therapy to people living in Oxfordshire, who are referred or self-refer to the charity because their lives are seriously affected by past experiences and who cannot afford private therapy or access it through the NHS;
- offering and allocating therapy spaces without regard to an individual's ability to contribute to the cost of their therapy;
- working with practitioners who give their time unpaid.

Activities and achievements

Therapy with MEET in Oxford is provided by experienced psychotherapists and psychologists with additional training in either Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) or Energy Psychotherapy (EP); these are approaches that facilitate healing through an understanding of the impact of trauma on the body, and work with the mind-body connection alongside talking psychotherapy. All therapists are registered/accredited by a relevant professional body and offer at least one session per week to a MEET client.

How MEET in Oxford operates

A management group of six MEET therapists, experienced practitioners in EMDR and EP, meets every week. The group includes two of the three founding members of MEET; three are also trustees of the charity.

The management group:

- discusses newly assessed clients and decides who to accept to the waiting list;
- looks at any challenging issues relating to MEET clients;
- considers questions around the management and development of MEET;
- supports the service coordinator and clinical lead in their work.

We take both self-referrals and referrals from a range of organisations and services within Oxfordshire. There is more information below about the source of referrals over the past year.

After receiving a referral, we carry out an assessment. This provides an opportunity for MEET to find out more about an individual's needs and to see whether MEET therapies are likely to be helpful, and for the individual to learn more about what we offer so they too can decide whether this is what they need. If it is agreed that the approaches we offer would be helpful, they go on our waiting list until an ongoing therapy space is available. MEET offers a maximum of 26 sessions, an unusually generous allocation for a free/low cost service, with reviews at four and 12 weeks.

At assessment, clients are asked if they would be able to make a financial contribution towards the running of the charity. It is made clear that no-one is refused therapy or treated differently because they cannot afford to donate. We suggest, as a guideline, that someone who is on benefits or the minimum wage may be able to contribute £5-£10 per session, while some clients donate just a couple of pounds. For those on a higher wage or family income we suggest a contribution of £15-£35.

Volunteer therapists

Over the year 2022-23 we worked with 14 practitioners.

MEET does not work with trainee therapists and is unusual in this respect. All our therapists are fully qualified, experienced practitioners, some of whom work with the charity in order to gain experience in their newer skills of EMDR or EP, others for purely philanthropic motives. All are required to attend a monthly peer support group. This provides an opportunity to meet and discuss with others working in the same modality, enables MEET to maintain an overview of the work being done with our clients, and is a forum where questions can be raised, challenges discussed, and support requested.

All the psychotherapists working with MEET give their time unpaid. However, we feel it is important that volunteering should not leave people out of pocket and are aware that therapists have costs such as insurance and professional registration fees. We therefore have a policy, where the charity's financial position allows, of paying a small honorarium when a therapist finishes work with a client. For the financial year 2022-23 this was maintained at £160 for each client with whom the therapist completed 26 sessions (or a pro rata amount for fewer sessions).

Management of MEET in Oxford

The Coordinator Ana Novaković managed the charity on a day-to-day basis, working 18 hours a week until February 2023, then 11 hours a week.

From February 2023, Karen Stowe took up the position of Clinical Lead, working 11 hours a week. This new post was created to provide clinical oversight and to develop both the services we provide to clients and partnership working with other organisations.

Consequences of Covid 19

Since the Covid pandemic in 2020, MEET in Oxford has provided most therapy sessions online, working with therapists around the UK. Not only has this enabled us to offer more sessions but clients who may have found it difficult to get to Oxford for weekly appointments can now access therapy remotely.

Three therapists work from the Quaker Meeting House in Oxford, so we are able to offer face-to-face sessions to clients who struggle to work remotely, usually because they have no safe private space, don't have the necessary devices or skills, or for other reasons.

Support group

During this year we ran a four-week support group for clients on our waiting list - an opportunity to help people understand the symptoms they are experiencing, and to teach a range of techniques drawn from energy therapies, EMDR and mindfulness that are known to calm the nervous system, reduce anxiety and lower stress levels. Many derive significant benefit from being together in a group and one of our ambitions in creating the clinical lead role is to expand provision of such groups.

Other organisations

Over the course of the year, we had discussions with a range of organisations to explore possibilities for joint working or provision of MEET in Oxford's services to their clients; these included a primary care network in Oxford City, a refugee charity, a charity supporting women with children taken into care. We also met with a group of therapists in another part of the UK who are hoping to set up a charity on a similar model to MEET in Oxford.

Demand for the service

Demand for our service continued to outstrip supply. When we have a substantial waiting list, we have a policy of closing for a few months to new referrals as we don't believe it is helpful for people to stay on a waiting list for too long. The waiting list was open for a period from March 2022 and again in January 2023, when we received over 50 referrals in two weeks.

Referrals, self-referrals and enquiries

In the course of the year we received:

Referrals for therapy: 55

- Please see below for details of the source of referrals.

Enquiries about therapy: 64

- Enquiries are made by phone, via the website or by email.
- 39 were from people enquiring about therapy for themselves.
- 19 were from referrers including medical practitioners (eg clinical psychologist, community midwife, specialist mental health nurse) and services such as rough sleeping team, independent sexual violence adviser, family support worker.
- Six were from others, mainly family members.

Clients we worked with in 2022-23

- The total number of free or very low-cost therapy hours provided was approximately 400. In addition, 12 clients were having ongoing therapy appointments at 30/03/2023; these therapy hours are not included in the totals.
- We helped 35 individuals over the year.
- A third of the clients finishing a course of therapy attended between 10 and 19 sessions, a third between 20 and 25 sessions, and a third needed the full complement of 26 sessions.
- Source of referrals received (55):
 - Most (39) self-referred.
 - Organisations making referrals included Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service, Crisis, Victims First, specialist NHS services, Turning Point, Elmore Community Services, Aspire, university counselling.
 - Other clients were signposted or recommended to apply to MEET by organisations including MIND and Talking Space.
- For referrals over the past three years, clients have waited an average of 22 weeks between MEET in Oxford receiving their referral and start of therapy. The average number of sessions per client was 22.

Practice Based Evidence

We use a PCL-5 form, which assesses the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, as an objective means of evaluating progress. The form is a 20-item self-report measure developed by the US-based National Center for PTSD.

Clients complete the form when they are assessed and again when they finish therapy. A reduction of at least 10 points in their score over that period indicates a significant reduction in trauma symptoms and is regarded as clinically meaningful. An increased score, no change, or a clinically less significant improvement (less than minus 10), usually indicates that a client was undergoing further adverse life experiences during the period of therapy.

We have been doing this since 2017 and at the end of March 2023 had collected data on 92 clients, to provide practice-based evidence for the efficacy of the methods we use. Given that most of our clients have complex trauma histories starting in childhood, and many are still living in challenging circumstances, the results are encouraging, with some clients showing tremendous improvement.

FIGURES SINCE 2017								
EMDR					Energy Psycho- therapy			
26 clients					66 clients			
Downward change less than 10 points, increased or unchanged	Downward change of 10-19 points	Downward change of 20-29 points	Downward change of 30 or more points		Downward change less than 10 points, increased or unchanged	Downward change of 10-19 points	Downward change of 20-29 points	Downward change of 30 or more points
19%	4%	15%	62%		15%	28%	24%	33%

Since MEET in Oxford started recording clients' scores, 85% of all clients for Energy Therapies, and 81% for EMDR had a significant drop in PCL-5 scores.

Clients' evaluations

When sessions end, clients are asked to evaluate the therapy they have received and respond to questions including: What did you learn about yourself from the therapy? What has changed for you as a result?

Please see below some of the responses along with clients' PCL5 scores where available.

** Through the course of the therapy I have experienced something akin to a 'soul recovery'.*

On a day-to-day level, I sleep better, I laugh more, I'm more inclined to trust myself and better able to reach out to others.

For me, MEET has been a lifesaver. . . I think it's wonderful – and necessary – that MEET offers an extended period of working. I can't imagine having made the kind of progress that I have done in any of the 'short' therapies. (PCL5 scores: at assessment 45; at end of therapy 21)

** I am no longer anxious all the time, I experience anxiety in appropriate situations. I am more confident. I am enjoying my life and I am happy. I look after my self – eating regularly, participate in exercise, mix with friends. . . (PCL5 scores: at assessment 53; at end of therapy 9)*

** . . . my responses were a result of a lot of traumatic experiences that were not my fault, and were valid. (I have) Considerably less fear and anxiety and less traumatic dreams. More confidence in myself and my thoughts and opinions. (PCL5 scores: at assessment 53; at end of therapy 4)*

** I can enjoy the present moment and look forward to hopeful things happening without a sense of doom.*

The process has been wonderful ... everyone has been so kind and thoughtful (PCL5 scores: at assessment 52; at end of therapy 25)

** I'm a lot less scared of lots of things than I used to be. I've visited the dentist for the first time in 20 years.*

Making EMDR and Energy Psychotherapy better known in Oxfordshire

One of the aims of the charity is to raise the profile of the trauma focused therapies EMDR and Energy Psychotherapy in Oxfordshire. We do this primarily by disseminating information and by giving experienced psychotherapists the opportunity to practise these approaches:

- We provide experienced therapists, who have added EMDR or Energy Psychotherapy to their therapeutic repertoire, with the opportunity to practise these skills in working with trauma. We refer clients to them who are already assessed as suitable for these methods.
- Our supervision groups, which MEET in Oxford therapists are required to attend, provide an opportunity for discussion with peers and for sharing knowledge and experiences.
- We work with a range of referring organisations which offers an opportunity to disseminate knowledge and understanding of the approaches we use and, through our work with the individuals referred, to demonstrate their effectiveness in working with trauma.

Acknowledgements and thanks:

We would like to thank our therapists, trustees, donors, referrers, clients and the Oxford Quaker Meeting who make MEET happen.

- MEET benefits enormously from the generosity of its therapists, all of whom give their time *pro bono*. They offer one or more sessions each week, run MEET groups, or contribute to the

management of the charity. Without them, MEET would not exist, and we are immensely grateful.

- We are supported by the Oxford Quaker Meeting, which generously provides rent-free therapy rooms and the support of the Meeting House managers.
- We are grateful to everyone who made a financial donation to MEET in Oxford, including the clients who made contributions towards the cost of their therapy.
- We thank our trustees who give generously of their time.

Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2023

	Note	Year to 31/03/23 £ rounded
INCOME		
- donations from clients		2,692.00
- other donations		539.00
- grants	1	750.00
- gift aid		249.00
Total income		4,230.00
EXPENDITURE	2	
- Management and coordination of the service		9,187.00
- Service development		4,594.00
- Communications and website		1,603.00
- Fundraising		510.00
- Training activities and client groups		510.00
- Governance		969.00
- Honorariums to therapists	3	995.00
- Supervision costs		1,500
- Website		403.00
- Subscriptions		194.00
- Equipment		110.00
- Expenses		348.00
- Misc		25.00
Total expenditure		20,948.00
Net income		(16,718.00)

Total funds brought forward at 01/04/22		69,228.00
Total funds carried forward at 01/04/23		52,573.00

Notes to the financial statement:

1 Final grant payment from Quaker Mental Health Fund UK (£3000 over two years ending April 2022)

2 The charity's principal expense is staff employment. Until February 2023, a Coordinator worked 18 hours per week with responsibilities including service management, communications and service development. From February 2023, Coordinator hours reduced to 11 per week with the creation of a new Clinical Lead post, also at 11 hours per week, to oversee the clinical side of the charity's work and develop partnership working with other organisations.

3 MEET in Oxford therapists give their time *pro bono*. MEET pays a small honorarium when a therapist finishes working with a client as an acknowledgement for their services and a contribution towards costs such as professional registration.

Analysis of financial statement:

- Staff time is allocated to separate expenditure categories. Time allocations for year ending 31 March 2023 are as follows:

Management and coordination of client applications and therapy sessions	54 %
Service development	27 %
Communications, marketing and website	9 %
Fundraising	3 %
Training activities and client groups	3 %
Governance	4 %
Total	100%

- The following is an analysis of total expenditure by cost component:

- Salary + costs	£ 17,013
- Honorariums to therapists	£ 995
- Website	£ 403
- Phone	£ 72
- Supervision costs	£ 1500
- Insurance	£ 288
- Subscriptions	£ 194
- Equipment	£ 110
- Out of pocket expenses	£ 348
- Misc	£ 25
Total expenditure	£ 20,948

Statement of assets and liabilities at 31 March 2023

	Year to 31 March 2023
Bank current account on 31/03/2023	£ 18,508.88
Savings account at 31/03/2023	£ 34,243.00
Total assets	£ 52,751.88

Cash book:

Brought forward on 01/04/2022:	£ 15,228.26
Plus receipts	£ 4,229.36
Plus transfer into	
current account from savings	£ 20,000.00

Subtotal:	£ 39,457.62
Less payments:	£ 20,948.74

Total balance at bank 31/03/23	£ 18,508.88