

Hope into Action Report for Dominic Beer March 2017

Summary

In their email of 27 November 2016, the trustees of the Dominic Beer Memorial Trust awarded Hope into Action £2,400 towards supporting a person or persons with severe mental health difficulties. £1750 has already been received and a further £650 will be forwarded upon receipt of a report. This document is the report as requested (March 2017).

At Hope into Action, we very much appreciate The Dominic Beer Memorial Trust supporting our work with the homeless and mental health. Thank you.

How have Hope into Action benefitted people with Mental Illness?

Our Theory of Change is that if people have a safe home and the security of positive relationships they will find the motivation to bring about positive change in their lives. 90% of our tenants have mental health needs and mental-ill health is the most commonly reported support need amongst the homeless according to Homeless Link. Our model is to offer housing **with support**, both professional and from community volunteers:

“...housing support is an essential element of looking after someone’s mental wellbeing. Investing in housing related support services can generate savings across health and social care, including avoiding acute admissions, as well as across criminal justice and care systems. This is on top of the core benefits that individuals get from being provided with choice, control, and independence in their lives.”*

What we do

Hope into Action supports some of the most vulnerable adults in Peterborough, Nottingham, Norwich and Cambridge to maintain living in the community.

HEAD OFFICE

Hope Into Action Hope Centre, 26 North Street, Peterborough PE1 2RA

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Registered in England and Wales No. 7309173. Registered charity No. 1137686



We offer housing (which is self-funding) and combine it with holistic professional and community-based volunteer support. Our main activities are carried out by our Empowerment Workers (EWs) and church volunteers.

We promote, recruit, train and meet monthly with volunteers to advise and support the mentoring process. This involves joining in events to promote our work and keep volunteer groups enthused.

We seek referrals from as wide a range of agencies as possible eg addiction services, mental health teams, the Prison. We build relationships with and work with other local organisations, including mental health teams to identify services that provide support to participants eg counselling services or other charities where our beneficiaries can volunteer.

When a prospective beneficiary is referred, we meet to explore if we can work together. At a second meeting we work together on risks, strengths and needs to further assess compatibility. Once agreed we can work together, a third meeting is at the house to introduce the other tenant(s) and explain house rules. EW's organise volunteers to be hands on with the welcome and move in. We ensure they register at the job centre and GP. EW's provide benefits information and support to aid the completion and submission of forms and help with budgeting. EW's mediate for the tenant and enable them to advocate for themselves at meetings eg with mental health and social services teams. This tenancy support is ongoing. An EW is available at any crisis point and we offer 24/7 emergency support.

When a tenant moves in, we meet them to form a support plan; identify barriers and signposting to support agencies and encouraging volunteering and re-engagement with estranged family. Progress is discussed formally every 6 weeks with meetings in place as often as necessary between, fortnightly at minimum. Here, the EW supports tenants to carry out actions on their plan and agrees any corrective action to address shortcomings. They deliver one to one motivational advice and guidance eg to maintain tenancy with practical skills; house cleanliness, paying bills. They offer listening for softer issues such as relationships and reconciling past hurts.

Our empowerment workers understand the spectrum of mental health problems and recognise common symptoms and behaviours. They understand the development of complex needs and the impact of traumatic life events and understand when and how to refer people to specialist mental health services.

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HOPE INTO ACTION provides houses for the homeless in partnership with local churches. We train and enable churches to engage with and mentor those living in the house, whilst providing the necessary professional support. We dream of churches everywhere housing the homeless. We dream of the homeless rebuilding their lives.

Empowerment workers meet once a month and share good practice examples of client support around complex mental health needs.

EWs run monthly forums for tenants and the co-ordinator runs an annual weekend away. All these events have planned activities for tenants enabling them meet and share experiences eg DVD and discussion, lunch or sport.

The volunteers mentor and befriend. They offer day to day support and companionship eg lifts in their car, but also accompanying them on a bus journey, helping fill in an official form. They use their networks to make introductions to social activities and groups and support opportunities involving a wider section of the community eg a sports club. They offer face to face contact eg cooking a meal together or walking in a local park offering supportive listening.

When appropriate, the EW explores move on options with tenants.

The attached case study features Kerry who tells the story of how having been abused, resorted to self-medication. She was diagnosed with bi-polar disorder but since receiving our support, she now feels she has stability, friends and engages well with counselling.

Our outcomes and how we work are described following the case study.

**Eliot, J. Briefing: Demonstrating the Effectiveness of Housing Support Services for People with Mental Health Problems: A Review, National Housing Federation, March 2011*

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