



Annual Progress Report

Off The Fence Trust

2017/18



Resisting poverty. Empowering people. Restoring hope.



Off The Fence Trust Limited
Charitable Company No: 5300691
Registered Charity No: 1108777



Annual Progress Report covering 2017/18 to the Beer-Harris Memorial Trust

The Trustees of the Beer-Harris Memorial Trust generously provided a grant of £1000 towards the work of Off The Fence's Antifreeze and Gateway projects. Here another report update explaining a little more of how we have used your generous financial giving and an expression of the gratitude for the grant that was made.

This document provides the report in order to:

- Confirm that the grant has been spent on the purposes initially stated.
- Provide information on how well the targets stated in the original application have been met.
- The practical results that the area of the charity has produced.

The grant that the Beer-Harris Memorial Trust kindly made to our work has been vital in enabling the continued development of strategically planned and carefully actioned support work among the most in need in Brighton & Hove. Your grant has allowed us to develop and increase the vital services we offer through the three different projects at Off The Fence, from long term solutions to immediate care in an emotional and practical way.

Your grant has enabled us to continue providing essential resources to the surrounding local community and build further partnerships with the City's voluntary and statutory agencies- something that now more than ever, we want to increase. With Brighton now classed as being in a state of emergency, with mental health services and homelessness at an all-time high, change can only happen if we work alongside other organisations where possible.

OFF THE FENCE TRUST

Resisting poverty. Empowering people. Restoring hope. Off The Fence is a charity founded in 1997 with a vision to end poverty in all forms around Brighton & Hove. Off The Fence work in 3 areas: Emergency outreach to those living on the streets and a homeless centre, Antifreeze which provides emotional, practical and spiritual assistance for exiting homelessness and supports those who have struggled with life-destroying addictions, mental health issues, job loss, family breakdown, violence and bereavement which have led to homelessness. Off The Fence offer support for women facing financial, health, domestic crisis' and more at the Gateway Women's Day Centre and a Schools & Youth programme provides prayer spaces, mentoring, mental health initiatives and other supportive services for pupils aged 5-18 in schools around the City. Off The Fence offers people hope, a way forward and the opportunity to live a new, better and transformed life.

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BACKGROUND TO OUR REQUEST FOR FUNDING FROM BEER-HARRIS MEMORIAL TRUST

Antifreeze gives life-saving support to homeless individuals around the City as well as those who, for many years, have struggled with addictions, mental health issues, job loss, violence and grief which have led to life on the streets. We listen to them and value them as people, offering motivational interviewing and one to one sessions with trained keyworkers. We provide access to a telephone, computers as well as foot care, healthcare, dental care, and legal advice. We offer help and alternative options to support those homeless



individuals and prevent more clients from entering a life on the streets. We work closely with many agencies to ensure our clients get the best help and liaise on their behalf with issues such as housing, temporary accommodation, offending history and finances. Antifreeze helps to restore client self-worth, independence and address financial issues. Open 4 days a week, the Antifreeze centre provides a safe space and welcoming place to connect with others in the community, and offers practical, emotional and spiritual support if desired, for exiting life on the streets. In 2017, Antifreeze was accessed over 7000 times, with over 800 individuals seeking services at the centre throughout the year, up to 70 per day during busier periods. The centre offers a place where homeless individuals can chat, find a sleeping bag, wash, get clothes and food, have a haircut, receive vital foot and dental care, and crucially begin to work with the team to get housed, back in employment and emotionally supported.

Last year, it was stated by the local council that Brighton & Hove is in a state of emergency. The City has



the worst rate of addiction and homelessness outside London, with one in every 69 residents sleeping rough, in temporary accommodation, lodging or worse. Nightly our outreach teams monitor the welfare of those sleeping rough and locate newcomers. Up to 40 volunteers and keyworkers, interact with homeless individuals wherever they may be seeking refuge around the City. In 2017, over 900 visits were made to those sleeping rough in the City.

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Gateway is significantly changing the lives of women aged 35-80 from many different backgrounds who find themselves overwhelmed by their circumstances and struggling with issues such as anxiety, depression, suicidal tendencies, domestic violence and abusive relationships. At the end of 2017, there were 1713 clients visits compared to 1697 at the end of 2016- the highest number of visitors Gateway has ever seen. By offering an impartial, caring and safe environment for women to meet with trained members of staff, Gateway provides a place where women can build trusted relationships, receive confidential support and signposting to other agencies when appropriate. With the loss of government funded services and previously existing societal structures that would have supported women in a time of crisis, Gateway offers a vital service. Gateway aims to empower women, give the support needed to help rebuild their lives and self-worth.

Ladies can simply turn up to a drop-in session, make an appointment, or be referred to the centre through agencies such as Social Services and doctor's surgeries. One to one sessions are always available to women needing to talk in a more confidential setting than within the main group. In 2017, 640 of these meetings were held compared to 600 in 2016. Often a relationship is built between a particular keyworker and visiting client. These meetings include dealing with and supporting victims of sexual abuse, depression management, combatting self-neglect, long-term care for vulnerable clients and suicide prevention. For example, 350 appointments were attended with clients last year relating to mental health, housing and welfare support. As a result of these meetings, Gateway have been able to provide emergency food parcels after learning more about clients' financial situations. Last year, there were 155 occasions to support this need. For many of the ladies unable to work or receiving little financial support, this has been a crucial part of the service provided. As well as face to face support, Gateway offers telephone support for isolated women struggling when the centre is closed and where

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outreach visits are not possible. Last year, there were 388 occasions of phone-based counsel given to vulnerable women. One lady shared her story with us:

“When my husband left me for another woman, he also left me with all his debts to sort out. Life became out of control and I eventually had to become bankrupt. The stigma, shame and reality was crippling. Having to rely on food banks and hand-outs was humbling. Gateway was able to help me alongside other agencies for help with housing and benefits and slowly I am getting life back under control.” ED

During 2017, workshops were accessed nearly 600 times. This range of workshops is in place to enable visitors to learn new skills, increase self-esteem and enjoy a creative afternoon in community with others. For a number of the ladies, this is the only time during the week where they can talk to someone and enjoy time in their own community, as many live alone or in isolating circumstances.



Gateway are continuing to develop their strategy and network with other professional bodies in order to meet a range of complex needs. An ongoing partnership with *MIND* charity has led to a series of themed talks covering topics relating to wellbeing, such as ‘Mood Boosting Tips’ and ‘Mood & Food’. These talks emphasise positive self-image, focus on restoring self-confidence and encouraging personal development. Positive feedback from these indicates that they have proven beneficial to many of the women in coping with mental health issues. Some of

the other organisations Gateway work with are: West Assessment and Treatment Service (NHS Mental Health), Pavilions (Alcohol/substance misuse charity), Lighthouse (for people with personality disorder), Brighton & Hove Council, a number of local churches, the B & H Community Food Partnership and RISE Women’s services.

The I.T suite at Gateway is a way clients can connect with others, whether family or friends further away. For those unfamiliar with using a computer, Gateway staff are on hand to show clients how and run I.T workshops to empower the ladies and help to build I.T skills. This is often a good place for assistance with personal administration to be given, such as filling in vital housing forms, appeals, health and welfare applications. Ladies can simply turn up to the centre for these activities or general help during drop-in times, make an appointment, or be referred.

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YOUR GRANT TO US

Antifreeze:

Please note that in the interests of client privacy and compliance with GDPR, all of the names used in this report are fictional, some of the dates are intentionally vague (just stating the month rather than the date) but their stories are true.

Updates

- Our Primary Keyworker who began with us in February this year has enabled us to work with clients with severe mental health issues to a deeper level due to her experience of working in the healthcare field previously. Outside of her hours at Antifreeze but contributing to her work here, she has begun training in counselling which she will continue later this year. Below, you will see one of her case studies demonstrating something of what she has brought to the team.
- We have recently begun to attempt to work closer with the Mental Health Team as we see mental health needs continue to rise in our clients in our Day Centre and those we encounter on our outreach work. We are aiming for the Mental Health Team to come and work with us in our centre more regularly- this we are hoping to develop on a weekly or every-other week basis.
- We are also contemplating and planning how we can provide courses that will deliver an increase of help to our clients with Mental Health Issues. The Detox Course that we ran with another charity earlier this relating to issues of addiction, with many closely tied to severe mental health needs earlier this year was a step in that direction but we want to provide more specialist, tailored support and continue to build on the skills and knowledge of staff as well as the input of outside specialist training.

Stats

- On the 20/7/18, out of the 47 clients that attended our centre, 16 of the clients present were clients who have displayed signs of experiencing severe mental health issues (for example, an inability to concentrate due to disassociation and difficulty in engaging with others, paranoia). That is just under 1/3 of the clients who attended. Sadly, some of these clients do not acknowledge or are unable to acknowledge at present that they have mental health issues which are in need of addressing. This could be because of fear, embarrassment or because the clients appear to genuinely believe they do not have mental health problems. Often paired with a substance addiction, it is easy to see how this can become so complex in terms of supporting these kinds of needs at the centre.

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Case studies

- This month (July 2018), *Daniel (client) returned to our services after a long period of time of not accessing them. We were delighted to see Daniel smiling and appearing to be in a much better of state of mind. He seemed like a different person to the last time that we saw him. When we last saw Daniel, he was incredibly vulnerable and suicidal, concerned about what he may do to harm others. He requested our help, explaining that he did not want to harm himself or anyone else. Here is a quote from Daniel to demonstrate the severity of his
- problems: “Sometimes, I wake up in prison with blood on my hands not knowing what I had done”. After an initial appointment where we helped arrange support for Daniel alongside other mental health professionals, we checked in with him regularly, monitored his behaviour and location, rung him to remind and encourage him to attend his appointments with other professionals and provided him with regular emotional support between psychiatric appointments. It is clear that Daniel suffers with episodes of psychosis.
- This Spring, we received a phone call from *Bertie (client) who we had helped for many years. He sounded very happy and had settled well into his new accommodation. Bertie suffers from schizophrenia. He appeared to be being taken advantage of by other rough sleepers when he was in Brighton & Hove so we were pleased when he made the decision to move away. It was also encouraging that he is one of the few clients to ever initiate this himself. He found accommodation to stay in by himself using our support and computer suite. This was after a long time of declining our offers to help him into accommodation as he initially had fears of moving into accommodation. During his time with us, we helped him in numerous ways but one thing that he particularly appreciated was one to one mentoring support, guidance regularly with a keyworker and the stability of a daily/weekly routine.
- Towards the end of 2017, it looked like *Gareth (client) was going to have to be permanently banned from our services because the schizophrenia that he suffers with was causing him to shout at imaginary people and challenge clients to fights. With the partnership with a local Homeless Mental Health Team, we were able to ensure that Gareth got the medical help he needed and the support, patience and care from us that he needed so that he did not have to be banned long-term.
- *Mike (client), who had been living out of his car for 6 months, came to our centre with severe anxiety. Mike could hardly walk into the centre and became distressed when he did. Our Primary Keyworker took him into a 1-1 room and they worked through some mindfulness techniques to enable Mike to calm himself and become more present. Over the next few weeks, our Primary Keyworker regularly met with Mike both with practical and emotional support. She worked closely with his keyworker from the St. Mungos street outreach team around housing support. She worked through some wellbeing tools to help Mike explore and start moving past behaviours and thoughts that were destructive or debilitating. Through this experience she noticed the complexity of this client and created two positive support plans, one specifically for staff to use as a tool to measure the needs of the client, put in place healthy boundaries and set goals. The other support plan is done with

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the client to acknowledge their strengths, what might be holding them back, identify and set goals and explore ways to achieve them. Mike has now moved into temporary accommodation but occasionally pops into the centre to meet with our Primary Keyworker so that we can ensure that he does not regress with the great steps that he has made. He is managing his mental health more positively and has started to think about his future and passions for the first time since he became homeless.

Gateway:

We also applied to the Beer-Harris Memorial Trust for funding towards our work with severe mental health needs at Gateway Women's Centre.

We continue to work alongside GPs and mental health services to ensure a supportive and unique package of care is provided for each individual who accesses the Gateway services. The number of GW clients who experience severe mental illness has increased this year, with increased numbers of self-referrals, increased signposting to GW by GPs and mental health and other community teams, and referrals directly from mental health services. We continue to liaise with secondary mental health services and GPs, and to promote our service within the community of Brighton and Hove to ensure that the women with the most severe mental health needs can access our services. Two of our clients are under the care of the SMILES (severe mental illness local enhanced service) team.



Gateway also responds to crises as they arise. When any of the Gateway clients experience sudden trauma, bereavement, loss or other crises that affects their mental health and wellbeing, we aim to respond as quickly as possible with personalised practical and emotional support. This may include signposting them to their GP, or mental health and other support services. A large part of our work involves supporting women who are expressing suicidal ideation or who have made recent suicide attempts. We intervene where possible to ensure the client remains safe and is able to seek appropriate support. For example, between April and July 2018, we have had conversations about suicide and keeping safe with women on 30 occasions. We make safeguarding alerts to mental health crisis teams and to social services, as required.

Between April and July 2018, the team have had 66 interactions with women specifically regarding severe mental health issues. This includes discussing treatments, medication, how to access mental health services, signposting and referring to other community mental health services as well as supporting and advising on the mindfulness and wellbeing circumstances of the individual. We also support women while they are awaiting NHS mental health treatments and after they have been discharged from mental health services. Many women with severe mental health issues feel they are discharged too soon from NHS

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services, or that they are discharged with inadequate support. Gateway often provides that support and input regarding mental health. Recently, one woman told us that she has now been discharged from her mental health team, as she feels that she no longer needs their support. She told us that attending Gateway's drop ins and other activities have led to her feeling much happier, more stable and more able to cope with the issues life throws at her. Another woman has reduced contact with her CPN, as she feels that the one-to-one support we offer her has been sufficient.

We also support a number of women who are concerned about a friend or family member who has a severe mental health issue. Women have told us that this role as a carer can often feel unsupported frightening and extremely stressful, with a huge impact on their own mental health. A number of women seek this support, which may include us offering signposting advice for them and their loved one and making safeguarding alerts on their behalf.

Our support for women with severe mental health issues includes one to one support – this can be in person, by phone, by text or by email, depending on which method is most helpful to the individual client. We also attend appointments with women, when they are too anxious, traumatised or distressed to attend alone. This year, this has included psychiatrist appointments, oncology appointments, mental health reviews, appointments regarding benefits, and GP appointments. We have visited and supported 3 women who were inpatients at the local psychiatric hospital during the past 12 months.

We meet weekly with 6 clients in their homes or in the community. These women have complex and serious mental health needs, and they are unable to attend activities at the centre as a result of these issues. Diagnoses include severe anxiety, severe depression, complex PTSD, agoraphobia, Dissociative Identity Disorder, and psychosis. Some of these women have more than one of these diagnoses. These clients were all initially introduced to us by secondary mental health teams. There is a huge demand for this intensive one-to-one support at home, and we sometimes have to place new referrals from the mental health teams on to a waiting list. Should our funding increase, we would be able to increase this aspect of our service.

Referrals: we have received 28 referrals so far this year. Of these, 9 were from secondary care mental health teams. 1 was from a substance misuse service.

Of these 28 referrals we received this year so far, presenting issues included the following: (Some clients presented with more than one mental health issue.)

Undisclosed mental health issues: 2

Depression 9

Anxiety 10

Trauma/ PTSD 5

Psychosis/ schizophrenia 2

Bi polar disorder 1

Emotional intensity disorder 2

As well as Dissociative Identity Disorder and/or Emotional intensity disorder and selective mutism

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Case study:

*Barbara was referred to GW by the secondary mental health team. She had a diagnosis of severe depression and anxiety, and had also experienced domestic abuse and violence. She was also in recovery from substance misuse issues. Barbara was seeking to make positive relationships and also to reduce her isolation by engaging with a community-based service.

Barbara attended our drop in craft sessions regularly, and also sought one-to-one support from the team from time to time. She was initially very anxious about meeting a new group of people, as she wasn't sure how people would react to her. However, over time, we observed that Barbara's confidence in a group setting increased. She was able to join in conversations, including starting conversations, and began to help and encourage other women around the craft table. Barbara started to feel confident enough to join some of the women for a coffee after the drop in session. She then felt strong enough to apply for some voluntary work, which she will be starting shortly. Barbara now sees her mental health worker less frequently, and they are planning to discharge her soon. Barbara says that GW's friendly, welcoming service has played a huge part in her mental health recovery.

*Jasmin had been referred to GW about 4 years ago, by her mental health team. She was struggling with suicidal thoughts and was finding it hard to cope with hearing voices. A worker had suggested GW to her. Jasmin was using a mental health centre in town, but found it hard to get to as she struggled to use public transport. She also didn't like using a mental health centre, where everyone seemed to talk about their mental health issues a lot. She felt she wanted to go somewhere therapeutic, where she could just be herself, without a mental health label. Jasmin found GW to be very beneficial from the start. Although she was aware that other women attending had issues, she liked that this wasn't the focus of conversations. Jasmin enjoys attending one of our art workshops, and has found a group of like-minded women that she can be creative with. She now feels ready to start applying for some part time work. We have offered to support her with using the computers to help her find work, as she finds IT a little tricky. She says that GW has made a big difference to her life – she can't believe how far she has come in terms of her outlook on life.

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We can see that the next three years with Council grant money being greatly cut will affect many medium sized charities but we believe Off The Fence has the planning, income streams and professionalism to ride that storm and become even more valuable to our City. Thank you for making such a vast difference to these two crucial projects within Off The Fence.

Thank you to all of you at the Beer-Harris Memorial Trust for championing us and for supporting us so passionately over the years. Your partnership has made many things possible over the years and we believe hugely impacted the way we are working to advance the change and the support of so many individuals needing specialist help.

OFF THE FENCE PLANS FOR 2018/19

- Increase the work designed to support clients in overcoming and leaving addiction
- Increase our connections with other local organisations
- Build on the range of tailored services and monthly activities programme on offer
- Increase the number of advocacy visits and outreach we are able to support homeless individuals on
- Explore opportunity of beginning a safe house for previously homeless clients from Antifreeze
- Increase the number of advocacy visits and outreach we are able to support less mobile and vulnerable individuals with at both projects
- Explore potential of a further safe house for Antifreeze clients in recovery- then look to secure a second in the coming two years

Your help has enabled **Off The Fence** to effectively reach those in great need who are supported by us on a daily basis. On their behalf, thank you.

Signed Paul Young CEO _____

Date _____

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