

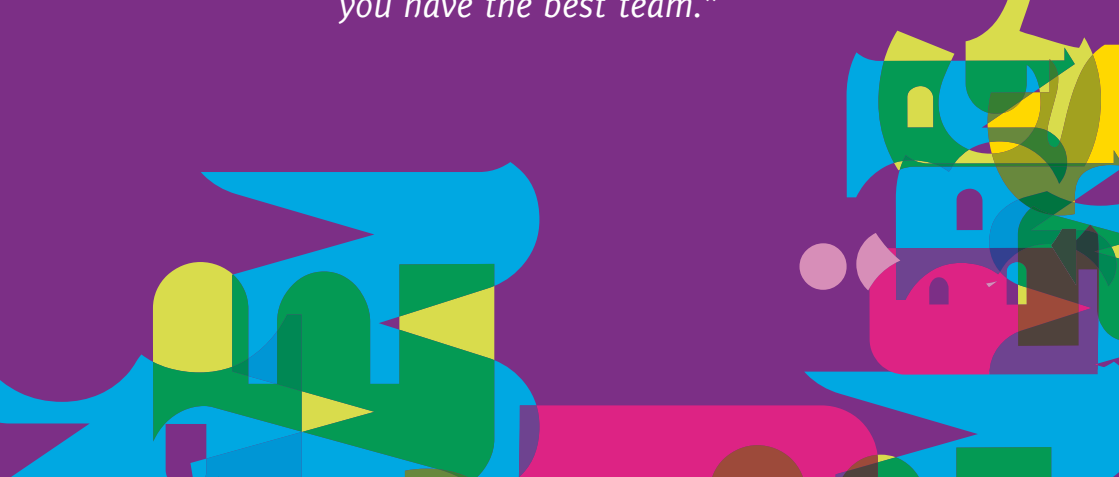


Quality of life for people living with HIV

BRIGSTOWE project

annual review 2010:2011

“To find support and so much non-judgemental help was amazing. I have my life back, a home, life is worth living. Nobody does it better, you have the best team.”





EVENTS

The year was a busy one, here are some of the events we have held and played a part in:-

LOOKING BACK ON THE YEAR

The last year has been challenging for the Brigstowe Project. On one hand, we were successful in bidding for the government's Transition Fund, designed to help charities develop new services and business models. On the other, we were told on World Aids Day that our Housing-related Support Service would be decommissioned in March 2011.

These ups and downs point to a theme of uncertainty that has characterised this period and the current times - for our clients, our staff and the organisation as a whole. The people we work with, for example, are having to cope with sweeping changes in the benefits system that will take several years to complete. Staff have been challenged to remain motivated while question marks hang over their jobs. And the organisation has had to rethink where its future sustainability will lie.

The solutions to some of these challenges remain to be worked out but, as usual, the people

involved with Brigstowe have been inspirational. Clients have grasped opportunities to learn about benefits changes, and worked in groups to help each other get to grips with new systems. Staff have continued to identify changing client needs and suggest new types of services and support that could be developed to help them. And the Chief Executive and trustees have campaigned hard to overturn the decommissioning decision and maintain our support service into 2012. For all this, I can't thank them enough.

David Whittaker Chair

20th June 2010



On a very hot Sunday in June staff and clients took part in **Bristol's Big Bike Ride**, cycling between 9 and 38 miles. This event raised over £1,350 in sponsorship money, which we are using for our Overseas Link Project and client welfare fund.

1st December 2010



We held a very lively **World Aids Day** celebration, where we enjoyed food, watched a film set in South Africa, heard stories from positive people, and listened to the Sing Out choir and a DJ.

20th October 2010

Our **Annual General Meeting** focused on the plight of people who have no access to public funds and the new service provide by The Brigstowe Project to this group, with two guest speakers working in this field sharing their experience.

22nd June 2011



We attended the launch and celebration of Bristol having achieved **'City of Sanctuary'** status, which signifies that Bristol is a place which welcomes Refugees and Asylum Seekers, offering them a place of safety and valuing their contributions.

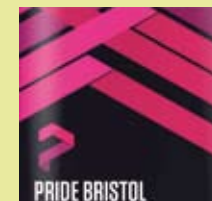
30th November 2010

Staff and clients attended the first HIV **"Think Positive"** Conference in the South West to be held in Bristol.



16th July 2011

In July we had a stall in the community tent at **PRIDE** festival, giving us the opportunity to celebrate, and reach a large audience in the heart of the city in Castle Park.



Celebrate World Aids Day & Human Rights



INFORMATION AND ADVICE

During 2010/11 we worked with 114 adults living with or affected by HIV, resulting in 76 cases being opened and 38 enquiries. In total 320 subject areas were opened. The information and advice we provided included housing, community care, benefits and disability. We also liaised with and referred clients to other services such as the Terence Higgins Trust, Business in the Community and Warming Bristol Communities - offering energy advice specifically for clients from minority ethnic groups, making in total 43 referrals and 77 signposts.

The year saw a noticeable increase in requests for advice on debt, employment matters and benefits. In response to benefit changes affecting our client group, we ran two workshops to assist clients prepare for the move from Incapacity Benefit to Employment Support Allowance; these were well attended, with positive feedback.

We generated a total of £102,172.82 for clients, a 40% increase from last year's figure of £72,731.

"The help and support given by the advisor was invaluable. Efficient, informative, helpful and knowledgeable. It was good to have someone to turn to, especially when there seemed no one else."

"I am glad and very grateful of the assistance that Brigstowe have given me in tough times. I am more focussed, confident and my self esteem is very high."

"Very informative, handouts necessary for future reference, excellent meeting."

"Well structured, provided clarity for me."

HOUSING RELATED SUPPORT

We continued to provide housing - related support to 40 clients in Bristol and South Gloucestershire, during 2010/2011.

This one to one support enabled clients to stabilise their lives and to discover the confidence and motivation to take steps to gain greater independence and change aspects of their lives.

We assisted with:

- Benefit claims and reviews, such as Community Care Grants, Housing Benefit and Disability Living Allowance;
- Resettlement support including helping clients to find suitable accommodation and manage the move;
- Charitable grant applications;
- Liaison with and referral to other voluntary and statutory services; making sure that clients get the services they need;

- Access to health services e.g. GP registration;
- Emotional support around family and health issues;
- Advice on debts, budgeting and utilities;
- Social networking and engagement, such as REACT! (client social group) to gain motivation, confidence and a sense of purpose.

Our support makes a difference, some of which is quantifiable e.g. we generated a total of £143,290 for clients, a 23% increase from last year's figure of £116,816, an average of £3,674 per client, compared to an average of £3,074 per client in 2009/10.

On 1st December we were advised by Bristol City Council that they were planning to end the funding for our Housing - related Support Service. We mounted a strong appeal against this, which was successful.

MIGRANT ADVICE AND SUPPORT SERVICE

During 2010/11 this service, initially for people with “no access to public funds”, was extended to include people who have been given Leave to Remain during the last six months and who therefore have access to public services.

Clients within this group may experience isolation, poverty, social exclusion, negative stereotyping and, in addition, further stigma and discrimination because of their HIV status.

One of the benefits of this service to Brigstowe is that we have formed some real partnerships and links with other organisations working with this group, including Refugee Action and Bristol Refugee Rights, which will continue to the advantage of our clients after the service closes in January 2012.

We provided information and advice to 21 adults in 2010/11, some of whom have severely restricted access to mainstream forms of advice, to ensure that they have knowledge of their rights and improved access to services. We generated a total of £15,668 for clients, an average of £746.09.

In addition, we provided one to one support to nine clients and generated a total of £28,382 for clients, an average of £3,155 per client.

“So helpful with advice and information and when my situation has been at most difficult place, they were the only people willing to help out. Thanks so much.”

CLIENT INVOLVEMENT

During the last year clients became more involved in local HIV-related forums and planning meetings. In particular, clients were active in contacting and meeting local councillors and Members of Parliament during our appeal to Bristol City Council, demonstrating that our support is enabling people to be proactive in determining wider political decisions as well as those relating to the Brigstowe Project.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Our social group REACT! continued during 2010/11. Twelve members of the group, together with staff members, went on a five day holiday on the Devon/Dorset border last July; the group was an incredibly diverse cross section of people.

Social events held through the year included a day at the Relaxation Centre, Clifton, a theatre trip to the Hippodrome and a family day out to Longleat.

Clients also benefited from a series of workshops funded by Awards for All which included the following topics: speaking with confidence; getting around Bristol; producing newsletters and publicity and a cookery school workshop at Bordeaux Quay.

“I’m grateful to Brigstowe for all the help, and I am much happier now and stable and have made great friends that I am planning and hoping to keep.”



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Quality of life for people living with HIV

The Brigstowe Project offers free, confidential and independent information, advice and support for people affected by HIV.

A copy of the full annual report and accounts for 2010-11 is available on our website www.brigstowe.org or on request.

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Registered Charity No: 1049945

Company Limited by Guarantee No: 3107835