

BREATHING SPACE

Impact Report



An early intervention project to
improve overall well-being.

WHAT IS BREATHING SPACE?

Breathing Space is a project that seeks to support those whose quality of life is low, primarily within Orbit Housing Association residencies.

Nearly half of UK adults believe they have had a diagnosable health issue, but there is still so much stigma around asking for help.

In 2016, Mind, Re-Instate, and Orbit each noticed this distinct lack in early intervention mental health services. They combined resources and expertise to create Breathing Space: a project that would be an intelligent and holistic approach to well-being.

At Breathing Space, we know that there is more to well-being than just physical health, such as housing, finance, relationships, and more. By taking this more conscious approach, we are able to mitigate some of the triggers for poor mental health and help people stay well.



HOW DO WE HELP?



One-to-One Support

By having a team of dedicated volunteers, we are able to give individual support to help people find their sense of well-being again.

1 Initial meeting- the client has the opportunity to talk about their problems and the support they need.

2 The Support Volunteer will create an Action Plan of how they will support the client. This can include a variety of actions:

- Setting short and long term goals
- Mentoring
- Referral to local services
- Making appointments

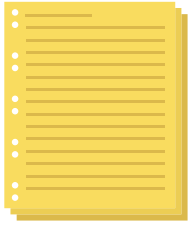
3 The client will then need to agree to the proposed plan of action. We cannot move forward with support without this.

4 The Breathing Space team will then stay with the client for as long as needed for them to feel like they can cope with life's ups and downs again.

Most people spend around 9 months being supported by Breathing Space, but we know some people will take longer than others to get back on track and that's ok.

Our long term support means people can take their time to meaningfully improve their well-being.





Case Study: Reaching those who need it

CB and RM are sisters who both live with a learning disability and have experienced issues with rent arrears previously. CB approached the team as her benefits had been changed and she was concerned about getting into rent arrears again.

The team met with her and contacted CAS Solutions who offered their support and recommended appealing against the decision.

A team member accompanied CB to an appointment with Citizens Advice Bureau the following day and arranged for her to be referred to Mind in Bexley's Recovery and Well-being service through her GP. We continued to support CB through the appeal process.

As a result of joining Breathing Space, CB, and RM have both been volunteering in Re-Instates Community Hub for the last six months and have under-taken accredited qualifications in safer food handling level one to enable them to develop employable skills. They regularly volunteer at Re-Instate's cafe, Basils, attend their social activities, and are interested in joining a fitness class.

CB says 'I didn't know what to do. I was scared I wouldn't be able to pay my rent again. It's nice to know there are so many people willing to help me'.



HOW DO WE HELP?



Community Outreach

We believe that to engage communities, we need to ask what *they* think. It's as simple as that. We regularly engage with the community to find out exactly what they need rather than just prescribe what we think will help.

How we engage communities:

What Works Well, Even Better If...

Regular community outreach events at Erith Shopping Centre to find out what people love about and want from Bexley.



Door to Door Engagement

The Breathing Space Team went from door to door speaking to Housing Association residents to understand their needs and how they could help.



How we respond:



Erith Fun Day!

Breathing Space worked alongside this event to engage with attendees directly to promote our service.



Talking Space

A group darts session aimed to provide a space for socialising and community building



Kerry's Fit for Life

Exercise sessions to support clients with depression and/or anxiety



Clear home, Clear Mind

A community event centred on de-cluttering your home to improve your wellbeing.



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5k Fun Run

To raise awareness of how exercise can impact mental health, we held a Fun Run in Erith and continue to hold active events



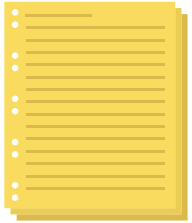
Erith Foodbank Visit

We visited and spoke to people in the food bank to raise awareness of our support.



Library/Event Outreach

Making ourselves and our support known to the borough at events like Ageing Well, Flower Power Event, Job Centre and more



Case Study: Clear Home Clear Mind

Ms M has three children as well as guardianship of a close family member who has behavioural issues. Mrs M struggled to comprehend her situation and began to become overwhelmed with life in general, resulting in high rent arrears.

This led to the creation of the Clear Home Clear Mind event to give Mrs M and local residents the opportunity to de-clutter their homes and give some piece of mind. For Mrs M, this meant she could clear her outside space and give her children a safe place to play. The event also brought the community together and neighbours were able to engage with each other- for the first time in some cases.

Furthermore, a referral was made to the BEAT project for physical activity and now Ms M swims and attends the gym. In addition, she was introduced to Mind services as a volunteer and is in the induction process along with looking into counselling courses for the near future.

Mrs M on Breathing Space: "The support and guidance that I have received from Tanya and Sue has been invaluable. I have grown in confidence and feel more capable, enthusiastic and optimistic about the future".



HOW DO WE HELP?



Local Partnerships

It can be difficult to find the right support for **you**. The insight from Mind, Orbit, and Re-Instate was that not all public sector bodies talk to each other, which can leave gaps in service provision, and we don't always seize opportunities to forge corporate partnerships. We recognised this as a problem and have made it a priority to foster these key relationships to raise awareness of key issues, improve referral pathways, and engage local businesses in charitable activities.

We're proud to be working with so many excellent organisations!

Out Partners:

Love London Working Helping clients find great work placements	Counselling Matters Providing accessible counselling to clients	Bexley VSC Supporting with volunteer recruitment and impact	GoodGym Providing excellent volunteers to support clients
McDonald's Sponsoring our 5k Fun Run to raise awareness of exercise's effect on mental health	SOVA Supporting our clients to fulfil their potential	Kerry's Fit for Life Class Providing fitness classes for clients suffering with depression/anxiety	Spice Credits Supporting us to reward our volunteers for their fantastic work
	Community Connect A referral pathway which helps us find more support for clients	Greenwich University Placing talented students with us	



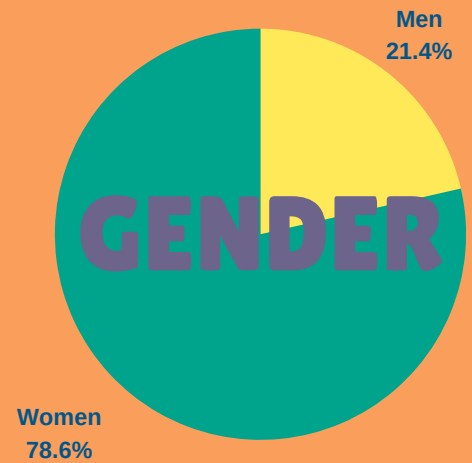
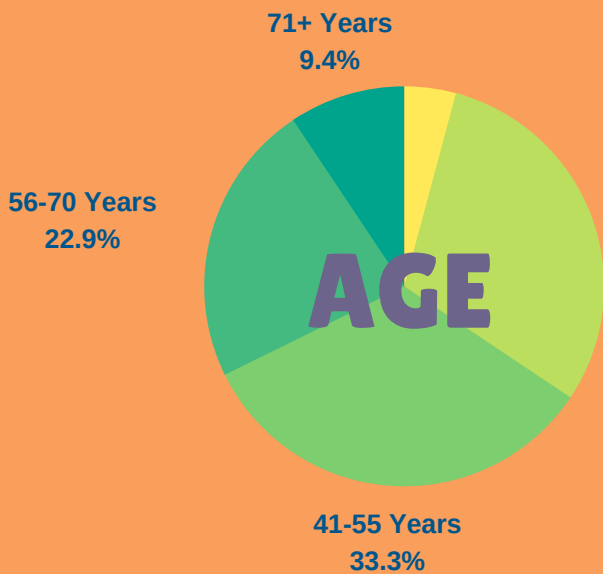
Case Study: Working with Counselling Matters

"Counselling Matters Bexley has enjoyed a close working relationship with Breathing Space for the last year or so. It has been mutually beneficial for both organisations, as we have been able to offer counselling to Breathing Space clients but have also referred counselling clients to Breathing Space for the kind of social support which we are unable to provide.

Breathing Space facilitated us in providing counselling by paying for room rental on our behalf, this is something which has been greatly appreciated."- Liz Hann, Counselling Matters Bexley



WHO HAVE WE HELPED?



Presenting problems have included:



OUR IMPACT: THE NUMBERS

**5 volunteers
moved on
into full time
work**

**150 people
supported
so far**

74%
of those that had
one-to-one
support
experienced a
positive change in
well-being*

*Service users were asked to complete a WEMWBS survey at 6 month intervals

**For every £1
invested in
Breathing Space,
£13.65 is
generated in
social value**

**Our biggest three outcomes and their
social value:**

**That's
£1,364,565
in 2 years!**

**Feeling in control of
life**

£67,387

**Getting into employment,
training or volunteering**

£137,669

**Relief from depression or
anxiety**

£942,131

All social value amounts worked out using HACT Social Value Calculator based on 2017-2019

OUR IMPACT: THE STORIES

"I feel like me and Julie (volunteer befriender) have been friends forever"

"Really enjoyed the session, it made a change as don't go out and talk to anyone..."

"Just a short email to thank Sue and Tanya for all their help so far . I am so glad you knocked on my door as I had been looking at and thinking of contacting Mind for a couple of years"

"The support and guidance that I have received from T and S has been invaluable. I have grown in confidence and feel more capable, enthusiastic and optimistic about the future"

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"Gets people out and talking"

"Enjoyable few hours, great to meet new people and nice ambience"

"I can't thank you enough for your invaluable mentoring these past 3 months. I have learned so much and I truly appreciate your time and the chance you provided me with to be part of your team and seeing how you work. A huge thank you and also for your trust in me!"

OUR VOLUNTEERS



Our volunteers are our greatest asset. Without their unending kindness and generosity we simply would not have the impact we've had.

Thank you to our Support Workers, Coaches, Counsellors, Admins, Event Support Volunteers!

We strive to make sure our volunteers grow and are rewarded for the time they spend helping people.

We do this by:

- Offering Time Credits
- Encouraging volunteers to bring any skill they have to their role such as coaching or housing knowledge
- Offering a variety of roles
- Offering training including Mental Health First Aid
-



A LETTER FROM A VOLUNTEER

To whom it may concern,

I just wanted to take the time, to write about my experience with the Breathing Space Project.

This has been my first experience as a MIND volunteer, and to be perfectly honest, I had no idea what to expect. I must say, I was very impressed by the professionalism and friendliness of Sue and Tanya. They both made me feel, very at ease right from the off.

I found the Mentoring course extremely helpful, and very informative and again the course was completed with professionalism, but the friendly, warming aspect still applied.

I have met with a mentee, on a number of occasions now, and I have found the whole experience very humbling and rewarding. I feel as though I am making a difference and helping in as many ways as I can.

I would not hesitate to recommend a friend to be volunteer, if it was something they were interested in. In fact I have recommended one recently.

I feel as though I am part of a team who is making a difference, and more importantly, raising awareness for mental health. I think Tanya, Sue and the rest of the Breathing Space Team, should be very proud, of all the hard work that goes into helping individuals get back on track.

Kind Regards,

Volunteer

THE FUTURE FOR BREATHING SPACE

We might be a young project, but that doesn't stop us from being ambitious. Our vision is for people to be in control of their lives, and be able to participate fully in society.

Through our work, we have noted 3 key areas for expansion:

Workplace Outreach

We are looking into how we can support residents with common issues that arise at work including mental health and reasonable adjustments.



Parent Support

There is currently very little resource available to support parents. We believe that by improving referral pathways for parents we can support an overall improve of service provision for vulnerable parents.



Housing Advice

A lot of people get in touch because there are issues with their housing and they don't know who to turn to. We have been able to solve these with help from knowledgeable volunteers but we want to build this into our core offer.



A WORD FROM TANYA AND SUE

Firstly, we want to say a huge thank you to our volunteers. They are undoubtedly the highlight of this project. The work they have put into this project is amazing and we're always grateful to have such dedicated and kind people working with us.

We also want to thank our partners. We have seen some incredible generosity from some excellent groups and we want to make sure they know how much they have helped us.

We feel so privileged that people decided to reach out for help and let us be part of their lives. We've seen people make tremendous changes to their lives, whether it's weight loss, employment, volunteering, making friends, mental health, and more. Our role is in facilitating and supporting these changes- it's our service users that put in so much work to improve their lives. It's been an amazing thing to witness.

It's been an absolute joy to do this work and we look forward to supporting as many people we can in the future.

Thanks for reading,

Tanya and Sue

