



Beer-Harris Memorial Trust  
56 Marmora Road  
London  
SE22 0RY

13<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Dear Miranda Harris the Trustees of the Beer-Harris Memorial Trust,

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude for the grant award of £2,500 in July 2023, the first of two years of funding, towards our programmes: Antifreeze and Gateway. 2023 presented great victories and challenges for Off The Fence as our local community faced hardship resulting from governmental policy amendments and the cost of living crisis. This report outlines some of our developments over the last year as we worked to meet the increasing demand for poverty-related support services.

### The Antifreeze Homeless Project



Brighton and Hove has seen a 155% increase between January and September 2023 (Brighton & Hove City Council, 2023) in individuals sleeping rough. Consequently, the demand for Antifreeze's support services has grown. Our Day Centre equipped us with the capability to offer life-saving services including showers, laundry and healthcare provision to 385 guests in 2023.

Images from our Antifreeze Day Centre

We anticipate the demand for these services to grow throughout 2024. We welcomed mental-health professionals, including Mind UK and Rose Rowkins (Start The Conversation), to provide workshops surrounding anxiety, suicide prevention and practical self-help tools. Our clients expressed how impactful these sessions were by facilitating open conversations in an emotionally safe place. This feedback has informed the decision to increase focus on 1-to-1 sessions to increase mental health check-ins and aid the journey to independent living. Our operational capabilities also grew through an exciting partnership with Royal Mail. This fast-tracked employment initiative has provided clients with jobs as postal workers. This initiative has proved successful as we currently have three clients enrolled and thriving in their new roles and have welcomed new clients due to media attention surrounding it.



### The Gateway Women's Day Centre and Outreach

Since re-opening our day centre in December 2022, the Gateway building has been a hub from which women in our local community can receive wrap-around care from our fully-trained Gateway team. The team provided 1-to-1 support, group therapy sessions, group skill-based activities, legal and financial advice and holiday celebrations to 130 clients this past year.



Christmas '23 gift table for Gateway clients

Our team aims to provide a space where women can receive the practical support they need while recharging before returning home. We have facilitated numerous social events through our Centre encouraging positive relationship-building and peer support. These events have recently included a silent disco to celebrate International Women's Day, a photography course and a painting therapy course. Our recent Autumn 2023 feedback survey provided the following client quote: "I had a 1:1 meeting last week and I was made to feel that my concerns were valid. The member of staff listened to me and answered questions. I felt so much better afterwards." As operate through 2024, the Gateway support team is working to act upon recently received feedback and curate a further diversified support package best suited to the current needs of the women we support.

### The Local Need



Off The Fence team and Start The Conversation

Across both programmes, there has been a notable increase in client numbers. This heart-breaking reality reminds us of how important it is to bring hope into situations of isolation and marginalisation through unconditional support and practical assistance. Each recovery journey is case-specific and unique to the individual. We are actively growing in mental health expertise. This month our team received suicide prevention training from Start The Conversation to intervene and support in times of crisis. This is just one of many opportunities to grow in mental health support City-wide and offer life-saving care.

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Mayor's Charity 2020-21 + 2021-22



**OFF THE FENCE**

Together, we are one step closer to seeing the poverty cycle breaking permanently across Brighton and Hove - individuals flourishing in secure employment, permanent housing, educational achievement and positive peer relationships.

Thank you for your support at this crucial time.

Yours sincerely,

**Analise Walls**

*Trusts and Foundations Income Lead*