

Beer-Harris Memorial Trust – Report October 2025

For 28 years Oakleaf has been supporting over 500 adults aged 16+ living in and around Guildford to manage their mental ill health. By "mental ill health" we mean from anxiety and severe depression to living with a diagnosis of schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or experiencing psychosis.

Our goal is to help clients improve their mental and physical wellbeing, find employment, learn new skills, connect with others, and feel empowered to make positive life choices. We do this by providing four main programmes of support – counselling, a daily wellbeing programme, employment support and work related training in IT and gardening.

The complexity of mental ill health is addressed through this variety of programmes. Support is accessible to everyone, offered free of charge or at a low cost (counselling services). A clinical diagnosis is not required to attend.

A common theme among clients is their experience of isolation. The stereotyping and lack of understanding they experience often means they are excluded or rejected by family and friends, increasing feelings of loneliness and alienation. In addition to the clinical aspects of mental illness, this social stigma greatly affects a person's self-esteem.



All our wellbeing activities encourage social interaction, and our activity timetable is broad to cater to a wide range of need. One area focuses specifically on mental wellbeing; these sessions aim to equip clients with the skills and tools to increase resilience and improve their confidence in managing symptoms when away from Oakleaf.



Thanks to a grant from the Beer Harris Memorial Trust, since April 25, we have delivered 17 valuable mental wellbeing sessions, with clients attending 97 times. Themes include 'Positivity Hour', 'Mindful Moments' and how to better manage anger.

The Activity Leader said 'The sessions are going very well. Clients often report feeling a sense of community and being heard. Sessions include discussion and peer-focused groups, providing practical tools for clients to take away'.

Clients told us:

'These sessions helped as I have difficulty with managing current family relationships'

'The session calmed my mind once I reached halfway through the course, which was welcome'

'It was lovely - just a feel-good course'

'I found it helpful because it addressed the issues and then moved into practical exercises, tackling problems therapeutically. I'm learning I can't change people and what they believe is right, but hopefully these courses will help me cope better'

Oakleaf offers community and a safe place, committed to supporting clients for the long term and as long as they need it. People come to us because they feel accepted and free to be themselves, which contributes significantly to their journey toward improved mental wellbeing.

Thank you so much for your ongoing generosity. It helps ensure our clients have access to the consistent, quality support they need.