



Tandem

the mental health befriending service
for Oxford

Annual Review 2018



Just as cycling is easier when two people share the strain, so Tandem offers befriending to help people through the pain of mental distress and social isolation.

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2018 reported:

A blanket increase in severe mental health issues across the county, with Oxford City 'well above the average' of all other districts.

Depression is the second highest diagnosis in Oxfordshire, increasing by 14%.

GP registered patients with anxiety or depression have increased significantly each year over the past four years.

Suicide of under 25s and cases of self-harm are statistically above the national average.

Tandem Chair's Report 2018

Over the last year there has been an increasing awareness of the links between loneliness and mental health problems. January 2018 saw the appointment of Tracey Crouch MP as the UK's first 'Minister for Loneliness'. Launching this initiative the Prime Minister, Theresa May said: '*For far too many people, loneliness is the sad reality of modern life. I want to confront this challenge for our society and for all of us to take action to address the loneliness endured by the elderly, by carers, by those who have lost loved ones – people who have no one to talk to or share their thoughts and experiences with.*' The experience of loneliness is not confined to older people. This year, through the efforts of BBC Radio 4's 'All in the Mind' programme, 55,000 people worldwide completed the BBC Loneliness Experiment; the largest survey of loneliness ever done:

The survey results indicate that 16-24 year olds experience loneliness more often and more intensely than any other age group. 40% of respondents aged 16-24 reported feeling lonely often or very often, while only 29% of people aged 65-74 and 27% of people aged over 75 said the same.

Tandem is now in its 20th year of working to support adults of all ages experiencing loneliness as a result of mental health issues in their lives. Since the financial crash of 2008 we have suffered a dramatic drop in the funding for this important work. However, through the flexibility and innovation that is facilitated by being a small and independent charity, we have continued to provide befriending partnerships and social group activities for our befriendeds throughout this difficult time.

Stephen Ralph, one of our former coordinators, conducted a review of our befriending service during the year. The resulting report pointed to the value of the long-term partnerships in place that provide a point of stability in people's lives

Another valued aspect of the partnerships is the connecting of service users with cultural and community activities, including visits to cinemas, art galleries, museums, theatres and concert venues. Other activities enjoyed include tai chi, ten-pin bowling, country walks, visiting places of interest and playing pool. Our volunteers also helped their befrienders in other ways such as using IT, help with writing a book, attending art classes and joining a choir. There was a high

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Brian's volunteer Ian is half his age but both share a passion for woodwork and art. Living with a severe mental illness for many years, Brian has had to cope with losing his family and his professional life. With a lively, intelligent mind and a desire to be creative, Brian's potential was held back by his lack of confidence. His problems with concentration also made him nervous about attending activities.

With Ian, Brian now attends a range of classes, building up his considerable skills. If he can't concentrate, it makes a great difference being able to leave early with Ian and not on his own. And he's now able to round off the evening with a drink and a chat with Ian, and hopes to go out on his own before too long.

Outcomes: Reduction of isolation and loneliness; confidence in pursuing goals; increase in social and recreational activities.

Many research studies have linked social isolation and loneliness with adverse health outcomes, while social engagement has been found to be a driver of quality of life.

A 2013 survey of Oxfordshire GPs found that 26% saw up to five people a day who they thought had come in mainly because they were lonely, 10% reported seeing up to ten lonely patients a day, and 4% said they saw more than 10 lonely people a day.

degree of satisfaction with the service that Tandem offers and a sense that our service users were able to enjoy a range of activities that they might not otherwise have had the confidence to engage with.

As ever I am very grateful to everyone: befrienders, befriendees, our coordinator, the management committee and our funders who have made this possible.

Jonathan Leach, Chair

Treasurers report:

Our income in March 2017/18 was somewhat depressed, as during the first six months of that year we suspended most of our fundraising activity until we could see the way ahead more clearly. Since our restructuring, support from our funders has been gratifying, and we expect to see a more robust income figure in the 2019 accounts.

Our intention for the rest of this financial year is to continue to build up our finances so that we will be in a position to employ a part-time coordinator in the spring of 2019.

Liz Shatford, Treasurer

Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2018

Receipts		Totals	Balance b/f (current account)
Donations	2,342		15,756
Grants	5,600	7,942	
Payments			
Core expenditure			
Coordinator	7,090		
Social Group	2,046		
Befriending expenses	763		
Volunteer expenses	665		
Travel	619		
Training	60		
Administration	1,320	12,563	
Savings account			14,838
Reconciliation			
Balance b/f	15,756		
Receipts	7,942		
Minus payments made	-12,563		
	11,135		
Closing balance at bank 31.03.18			11,135
Balance in savings account			14,838
Total cash and savings			25,973