



Core service grant Impact report Ben's Centre 2018-2019 (year three)

In this, second year of a three year funding program from Sheffield City Council Ben's Centre received £53,146 to fund our services.

Ben's Centre is the only "damp" centre in Sheffield, this means we work with vulnerable clients who are able to access our day centre, and Outreach program whilst under the influence of substances. This approach ensures that we accept our clients and their many, varied issues in order to support and work with them without turning them away due to the primary source of their vulnerabilities. We often work with clients who have been turned away or barred from other services in Sheffield centre. Poor behaviour and clients being under the influence can often leave them unable to engage with services, it is exactly this reason that we are a damp centre and are there to support the individuals who are unable to adjust their behaviour to fit alternative services' criteria.

In an attempt to capture the work that we do, not just in statistics and engagement numbers but also in the softer, less tangible outcomes this report shows the efforts that we go through to build relationships and work together with clients in a co-productive way to eventually improve clients' lives within our three overarching outcomes.

1. Physical health
2. Mental Health
3. Structured, positive lives



This report includes some narrative passages (in blue) that hopefully explain the delivery methods of our team and should help to glean the details that are often missing from data heavy reports and show the impact of our service through the eyes of our clients. Data gathered in the form of daily monitoring is also included to give weight to the narrative passages as well as testimonies and case studies from the clients themselves.

During monthly client consultation sessions our current Ben's Centre clients were asked "what are the three best aspects of Ben's Centre?"

The top 3 results were:

Respect and staff relationship

Regular hot meals

Support to access other services

When asked for reasons for these areas the following statements were made:

"The atmosphere brings me out of my shell"

"Staff always help me to make appointments and are encouraging."

"Ben's helps me to have structure"

"It's calm and makes me feel safe"



'My mental wellbeing is better than it was because I stopped drinking... Ben's staff helped me with that.'

(Anonymous client, Feb 2019)



Number of days open: 193

Visits by clients (total): 5954

Visits by male clients: 5287

Visits by female clients: 667

Hot meals provided: 5954

How does this tie in to our three overarching outcomes:

Nutrition is obviously a major factor in maintaining **physical** and **mental health**; some of our clients only eat healthily whilst engaging with us so it is vital that we provide this service regularly. The structure of regular meal times also helps us to gradually introduce structure into client's lives and improve their chances of living **structured, positive lives**. When we feel that some clients are ready we offer them a position as a **time builder**, a program set up by St Mary's church where clients can help out with low level chores in the dining room to help them gain ownership and responsibilities without being overwhelmed and too far out of their comfort zone.

My role is to welcome and assess everyone who comes to Bens on Mondays and Tuesdays.. Everyone gets a personal 'welcome', 'hello' and eye contact. This is fundamental in terms of building self worth and acknowledgement of our clients as individuals'. Those 'welcomes' are consistent everyday irrespective of what may have happened in the interim and are part of the specific routines and structures Bens offers. Every day is a new day and we want to set that day up as positively as possible irrespective of the uncertainty and chaos they may have encountered/been involved in before arriving at 10.30.

This entry to the building is also our opportunity to gauge presentation, and levels of intoxication. Individuals are signed in, they are asked to put sleeping bags, rucksacks and valuables in our bag cupboard, and any alcohol handed over for safekeeping to be returned on leaving the building (dependent drinkers cannot just cease drinking, this approach allows some to drink less as they are distracted through socialising and activities at Bens, for others they will mitigate withdrawal symptoms with going outside for a drink and returning)

Always discreetly but diligently we are monitoring mood, potential flare ups, and identifying those who may require extra one to one time or follow up for the week ahead.

Anne Byerley, project worker



Total number new assessments: 45

Drug and alcohol advice: 824

How does this tie in to our three overarching outcomes:

Drug and alcohol advice and interventions are paramount in helping our clients to reduce and consider their substance misuse. Without this supportive approach they would be at the mercy of their addictions and find reaching out to external substance misuse services virtually impossible.



'...when I'm in the house I climb the walls; I drink out of loneliness...coming to Ben's is a distraction and makes me feel hopeful. I trust the staff.'

(Anonymous client, Dec 2018)

The majority (99%) of clients consulted valued the relationship of trust, reliability and consistency between staff and clients as the most important factor across the three areas of physical health; mental wellbeing and finding a more structured life.

Today, amongst many tasks a colleague and I need to immediately discuss allegations of drug dealing on the premises with a long-term client. This rarely happens but needed to be acted on promptly. The discussions with him focused on the reported observations of clients and staff - the risks his actions posed to self, others and the project were outlined. He accepted this and the subsequent ban that followed for a specific period.

There are relatively few exclusions in my experience, given the numbers of clients, the nature of chaos in their lives and complexity of behaviors we manage. In the main these follow rare threats of violence, or more likely drug related behaviors. Respect, support and continuity and consistent timeframes around breakfast, lunch times and opening and closing times gives structure and a framework for the day. This structure and effective mutually respectful relationships between staff/volunteers and clients build self-esteem and confidence in our clients. This in turn can sway individual's motivation to manage or change behaviours and follow up support. We do this by upholding people's dignity, developing mutual trust and acting as advocates. Our interventions are motivational and intended to build self efficacy in clients to be more confident at resolving issues, finding solutions to problems themselves and/or engaging meaningfully with other agencies. The benefit of trusting relationships and consistency is that we can have some regularly difficult and challenging conversations about accountability and personal responsibilities regarding choices individuals make (both poor and good ones!). Every intervention and conversation is a potential learning opportunity...evidencing politeness during a phone call, expressing thanks, showing how to negotiate auto response phone calls with the DWP/Job Centre + with patience and diplomacy mindful of trying to get the best outcome are all tiny but incrementally significant in empowering our clients to negotiate an increasingly dwindling set of necessary support services beyond Bens Centre involved in their lives.

Anne Byerley, project worker



Housing advice: 337

Benefits support: 337

Sign posting: 706

Referrals to other agencies: 669

ID letters supplied: 170



*'being at Ben's stops me from being at risk of drugs and alcohol;
I feel supported'.(Dec 2018)*

How does this tie in to our three overarching outcomes:

Maintaining a home is another way that we support clients to live **structured, positive lives**, it plays a huge part in increasing a client's self worth and gives them a place of sanctuary when they are not at Ben's Centre. Without correct benefits advice and support this would not be possible. External agencies are very important in the overall wellbeing of our clients, we refer and often escort clients to appointments as well as sign posting where further support is not deemed necessary.

70% of clients said it had helped to talk to staff about housing problems. 50% said the advice and assistance regarding benefits, housing and detox programmes, together with the confidence to sustain detox, was a significant factor in helping to lead a more positive life.

Often a client's sense of entitlement, and immediate attention is not unusual to witness. They are gently prompted to wait patiently, to consider finding the number they want from our list on the wall and think about what they need to ask, and what information to share whilst waiting. Often interventions are made in the knowledge that previous calls ended badly due to previous anti- social and inappropriate conversations. Frustrations or acute anxiety and inability/unwillingness to try different approaches are extremely common but if necessary we try again next time, and the next time... because that's what we do.

The day continues with conversations and games of pool with clients in the hub of the main room where the pool table and computer hold attention and distraction. The atmosphere is pleasant, low level but respectful banter about various events. In between answering the door, signing people in and out, running upstairs to check a file or three, answering the phone to numerous queries from other agencies, conferring with colleagues, collating lists for items wanted from our clothes store, contacting other agencies and applying a temporary dressing to a wound.... No two days are the same!

Anne Byerley, project worker



Activities: 3788

Access to clothes store: 795

Phone access: 1165

Internet access: 965

Access to laundry: 321

Shower: 303

How does this tie in to our three overarching outcomes:

Personal hygiene and access to new clothes helps raise the self worth of clients and encourages them to take care of themselves and their wellbeing. This is a small piece of the puzzle but eventually leads to increased **physical** and **mental health**. Access to phones and internet not only helps clients to keep connected to services and benefits systems but also helps them to maintain and/or rebuild relationships with family and friends, a must for working towards a **structured, positive life**.



'Offering activities that engage clients in learning new skills and developing potential has had an impact on the challenge of addressing addictions; 'time spent engaged is not drinking time... Ben's has brought me out of my shell. I'm not lonely there and have managed to reduce my drinking and self-harm. I feel brighter'

(Anonymous client, Jan 2019)

Predominantly, help to access/ gain advice on services was the most prevalent (70%) as key to a more structured life.

30% said the activities program helped them to feel more positive and brought more structure.

This day, like most others sees the arrival of a complicated individual tormented by poor mental health whose erratic rough sleeping between nights in temporary accommodation had seen his presentation rapidly deteriorate of late. Advocacy from Bens in multi- agency meetings and resulting action plan sees us continue our 4-x weekly offer of showers, laundry and fresh clothing and building self- esteem to enable him to seek out GP/Healthcare support and better manage his sores and open wounds to heal. Sores that have their own story to tell, of beatings, and drug withdrawal related scratching, persistent anxiousness and constant touching, 'tick' like behaviours, paranoia and agitation about the threats he feels subject too. None of that evident this morning as he greets me with a hello and a smile telling me and passers-by that he won't be in today because he has appointments to keep at Probation and Addaction... but he needs to sleep first. Affirmations were shared about his following his plans and a reminder that we're always pleased to see him, in between times or the next day.

Anne Byerley, project worker



Mental health interventions: 1771

Brief interventions: 1940

Health and hygiene products: 619

Physical health interventions: 1570

Extra nutrition (fruit/supplements): 822

How does this tie in to our three overarching outcomes:

These interventions can be anything from encouraging a client to attend a GP appointment to actually dressing wounds. Our complete package generally consists of identifying a **mental** or **physical** problem through one to one work, then follow up work and advocacy to help clients to move on from a particular problem. Often interventions are around substance misuse and how to tackle a particular hurdle in moving forward in a supported and gradual way.



'if I feel low staff will listen..it stops me from getting depressed on my own'

(Anonymous client, Jan 2018)

Overwhelmingly, 99% of the clients consulted said the meals provided at Bens had had a positive impact on their physical health.

New clients to Bens who refer themselves or come via outreach contact are often allowed to join us for a drink or meal and spend time in the centre to experience what we do. This can help to dispel any myths or perceived fears they may have, familiarize themselves with centre, our staff and volunteers and, meet their peers whom they often already know through the homeless communities in the city. It is also our opportunity to informally assess them too, and whether they can keep to our expectations of behavior and engagement. A more formal planned assessment/contract is arranged. A further opportunity to engage and check out individuals needs and wants from accessing Bens Centre, as well as collating information about their circumstances and key personal details. This written agreement forms part of our record keeping and accountability, the limits of confidentiality, information sharing and outlines what Bens Centre can and can't offer as well as our expectations of individuals whilst in the centre. Interactions are focused primarily on building rapport and establishing relationships that promote harm reduction and brief interventions. Individuals' attendance and interventions, engagement and relevant behavioral changes are recorded daily.

Anne Byerley, project worker



Outreach interventions: 2111

Trust building interventions: 5954

Sleeping bags: 193

How does this tie in to our three overarching outcomes:

Trust building is imperative to building the client-worker relationship and is the key stone of any progressive work. In particular our outreach worker patrols the street and develops relationships on the streets in order to, eventually, bring clients into Ben's Centre to start or continue their progression in all three main areas. Although the work has already begun during outreach patrols we are in a much stronger position to support whilst inside the day centre.



'Clients gain hope from being in a positive, accepting space and look at ways to restructure their lives: 'I've now got someone I can talk to; I have more hope of a better future and I'd like to come back to volunteer when dry...'

(Anonymous client, Dec 2018)

100% clients valued the companionship and support from staff as the reason for improving hope and positivity.



Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale

During this year we began to make use of the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS) to measure changes in client's wellbeing. We then used the HACT Social Value Calculator to highlight the social value of the improvements to client wellbeing, giving us a monetary value that our service has saved statutory services in Sheffield. The results, based on a sample of our regular clients, are as follows:

We collated an average social impact of £12,246 per client with a net value of £89,322 from a sample of regular clients.

Clients scores had improved by an average of 8 points after a period of support from Ben's Centre

Reference:

Mental Health and life satisfaction: the relationship between the Warwick Edinburgh Mental wellbeing scale and life satisfaction

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Source: www.hact.org.uk

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