

Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project



Annual Report

OVERVIEW

The objects of the Charity are to relieve poverty, distress and hardship amongst unemployed people and their families living or staying in the Brighton area, regardless of race, sex, age, ability or sexual orientation.

Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project aims to provide a package of practical, volunteer run services which help families and individuals to challenge the affects of poverty and disadvantage.

The Centre has at its heart an ethos of empowerment through self help; people disadvantaged by unemployment, poverty, ill-health, lack of opportunity and poor housing can access our integrated and practical services, while at the same time coming together to work to improve both their own and others' quality of life.

We have over 2,000 users and the Centre is run by 283 volunteers. We have eight main projects run by teams of volunteers and organised around a day centre setting.

Our 2009 user survey revealed that:

- 51% of users described themselves as having mental health problems and 39% physical health problems
- Workers estimate that 70 to 80% of users have mental health or drug and alcohol dependency problems
- 61% have been unemployed or on sickness/disability benefits for more than 12 months
- Over the past 12 months 22% of users have lived in temporary accommodation or been homeless
- 15% have had problems with drugs or alcohol over the past twelve months
- 91% of users described our services as either 'excellent' or 'good'
- As a result of using the Centre, 76% felt more confident, 58% felt their skills had increased, 64% felt that their wellbeing had increased and 65% felt less isolated



CHAIR'S REPORT

2009/10 has been a really great year for the organisation. We have consolidated our funding base by securing three year funding from key funders. We have established two new projects, undertaken a management restructure as a result of our organisational review and secured funding for phase one of our plans to make the building more accessible. Despite the general financial gloom we have been successful in attracting funding for new initiatives and many of our user groups are flourishing, undertaking some fantastic new engagement activities. But we are not complacent; we are acutely aware of the cuts that will be taking place after the election. However, with thanks to Tudor Trust funding, we have been able to strengthen our organisation: we have undertaken a full organisational review which has enabled the Centre to undertake a management restructure. This has allowed us to retain our user-led ethos and we have been able to develop a five year Development Plan. We believe that we enter 2010 more resilient and more focussed.

Highlights of the year:

- Hardship Fund support has allowed us to broaden the advice services we provide by investing in volunteer training for office volunteers so that they can provide quality advice and referral at the first point of contact
- ESF funding has allowed us to develop our Allotment Project, bringing in external expertise around training and mentoring and enabling the purchase of new equipment, plants and seeds
- Established a new Family Support Project, which has created the opportunity to work in a more intensive and structured way with families who are struggling and allowed us to work in close partnership with other agencies helping to build successful outcomes for our families
- Set up a new Office Project supporting a team of volunteers to work in our very busy reception, which provides the first point of contact for service users
- Run a fantastic range of activities, events and outings: Washbrooks Farm trip, visits to our Children's Allotment at Stanmer Park and Tilgate Park; Christmas parties, Christmas lunch, Knowles Tooth Residential weekend for families; participated in the Tarner Festival, parenting groups,

Brighton Festival Art exhibition and the Saturday Cookery Club. We have run a Women's Group, a Walking Group, Stress management sessions, a volunteer celebration, adult learning day, trip to Brighton Museum, cinema group, family fun workshops in the school holidays, photography group and a Dad's Group

- The Organisational Review has facilitated the restructuring mentioned above and helped us to kickstart plans to make the Centre more accessible; although slow and at times challenging, this process has galvanised our service users and generated an increased sense of ownership and belonging
- In March, building work started in our playroom. We are restructuring our playroom facilities, installing a new energy efficient boiler, building an external play terrace allowing our children independent access to outside space, upgrading w/c facilities and installing a dedicated child's w/c and a disabled w/c



CHAIR'S REPORT continued

Plans for future periods:

The Charity will continue to provide the eight projects previously listed.

Plans for the coming year, include:

- Starting our local history project involving users and local people in researching slum clearance and redevelopment in the Tarner area
- Our Creative Wellbeing project will use creative activities to address the mental health needs of users and generate pathways towards support agencies
- Completing our Organisational Review and attempting a name change for the organisation
- Secure funding to upgrade our computer room, invest in creative software and install computers in the main area to open access
- Secure funding to provide additional sessional work in our Playroom allowing coordinators to focus on implementation of the EYFS
- Secure funding for new loan and safety equipment for our Temporary Housing Project
- Securing funding to develop our Saturday Cooking Club
- Secure funding for Phase 2 of our Access Project, which will involve installing a lift, making the main area accessible from Tarner Park and the ground floor
- Reviewing our new management structure
- Invest in training to support our newly created action groups, set up to create a structure for centre management work
- Continue work to strengthen our Trustee body
- Continue to develop our social policy work and to support our partnership work with community, voluntary and statutory services across the City
- Continue to invest in volunteer training and to provide high quality placement and training opportunities, including working with MA Social Work students

TREASURER'S REPORT

Financially, BUCFP had another good year in 2009-10, boosted crucially by a grant from the Hardship Fund. This has meant that we have been able to offer more to people at a time when they desperately need us. We now have a good level of reserves which not only means that we can cover unexpected shortfalls but can also plan the replacement of capital items in a considered manner. Below is a table with key figures; the full accounts can be obtained from us at 6 Tilbury Place.

	2010 (£)	2009 (£)
INCOME		
Grants	271,212	221,265
Donations	2,773	22,630
Self-generated Income	18,759	15,185
Investment and Rent	3,812	6,238
TOTAL INCOME	296,556	265,318
EXPENDITURE		
Charitable Activities	269,506	222,802
Fundraising Costs	14,088	9,291
Governance Costs	1,658	1,678
Total Expenditure	285,252	233,771
Surplus/Deficit	11,304	31,547
Balance Brought Forward	66,347	34,800
Balance Carried Forward	77,651	66,347

PARTICIPATION PROJECT

Encouraging and supporting people into volunteering and providing activities, events and groups to engage the hardest to reach in our community.

A sign of the times - we have had a huge number of people wanting to volunteer in all areas of the Centre. This year we made the Photography exhibition a permanent feature of the Centre with the theme 'a celebration of 28 years of BUCFP'. We have had lots of fun working on the organizational review with all our staff, volunteers and users trying to find an alternative name for the Centre - and lots of other things too – the Art exhibition; and events for the Book project and the Photography Project.

1,080 user contacts in the Participation Project

80 people involved in the arts and crafts group

30 involved in the art exhibition

10 involved in the women's group

35 involved in the walking group

40 involved in the sewing group

12 involved in the cinema group

12 people in the photography group

12 people in the magazine group

200 people participated in the review and name change process

100 people took part in the volunteer celebration

EDUCATION PROJECT

Providing a range of courses aimed at breaking down barriers in returning to study, classes in healthy living, creative arts, languages and dance and movement and a range of computer courses, as well as volunteer supported computer access sessions.

The courses we offered this year were as usual hugely varied, ranging from Japanese to a Beginner's Computer course. The ethos of the Centre is that wherever possible we provide courses that Centre Users want and following consultation we are going to trial a longer course in Digital Design; these are usually far too expensive for anyone on benefits to access.

223 people took 49 ICT courses

439 people took 76 other courses

877 people accessed the computers

24 took part in mind stress management

100 people engaged during the Adult Learning Days

23 volunteers run the classes



FOOD PROJECT

Providing a daily hot meal, a safe and welcoming social space, access to drinks, children's play area, user run whole food co-op and allotment project providing fresh produce for the Centre.

The Food Project had a lot going on this year. We began with two new workers, Helen and Emily, in April. We restarted a monthly Saturday Cookery Club and fought off an attempted eviction at the Centre allotment! We ran a pilot Food & Mood workshop which went well, put on several organic gardening training sessions at the allotment, and had a lovely Christmas social there in spite of freezing cold weather. Big thanks to all our hard working cooks and gardeners, not forgetting the dedicated Tea Bar volunteers.

We cooked 10,547 hot meals

35 people came to the Saturday cookery club

We have 48 kitchen volunteers

65 people in the allotment group

80 parents and children attended the 'soup and stomp'

We have 49 allotment volunteers

OFFICE PROJECT

Providing a first point of contact, helping people to access services, assisting with complex queries, signposting, taking bookings and managing petty cash. Providing quality volunteer opportunities with excellent pre employment training and opportunities for building skills and confidence.

The Office Project Worker supports a team of 18 volunteers to run the Centre's busy reception, taking bookings, answering phone calls, helping users to access centre services and managing petty cash. Last year we had funding from the Hardship Fund to make improvements to the reception area, ensure that two volunteers are on reception at all times and creating phone and internet access in the reception area. We also provide in-depth training for designated lead volunteers to increase support for users at a time when many are experiencing job losses and financial insecurity.



WELFARE RIGHTS PROJECT

Trained volunteer advisors provide advice on benefits and social welfare issues, representation for appeals and tribunals, home visits and telephone advice line.

The group's work this year has been dominated by the previous government's attempts to get sick claimants into non-existent jobs – we have helped with untold Employment and Support Allowance appeals – and the shocking effects of the Right to Reside Test which have resulted in inhumane treatment of foreign workers, including EEA nationals, who become too ill to work.

741 people supported by the Welfare Rights Group

1485 user contacts during the year

10 Tribunals

18 volunteers make up the Welfare Rights Group



TEMPORARY HOUSING PROJECT

Provides advice and information on housing issues. Access to laundry, equipment loan, free clothes, bedding, toys and equipment, help finding schools and sourcing furniture and equipment.

At the Centre we have continued to see many homeless and inadequately housed single people and families this year. Some are lucky enough to be in squats, so not out completely in the cold like those we see who are living in tents.

The housing situation in Brighton hasn't improved, and unless you have a deposit, a month's rent in advance and a guarantor, getting into the private sector is virtually impossible. Imagine trying to do that if you are on benefits! It is therefore good that we can still provide people with some practical support in the way of food, clothing and advice when they are facing such a difficult time in their lives.

76 families supported

69 individuals

1,113 user contacts

10 volunteers

PLAYROOM PROJECT

Providing a structured environment for supervised play and learning that enables parents and carers to access services or volunteer. The project works closely with the Family Support worker.

We had a great year with all our usual round of outings, events, Volunteers Training and ongoing development of our work with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

By the end of the year the long awaited redevelopment of our crèche facility, courtesy of Brighton and Hove City Council Early Years and Childcare was confirmed and the building work has just begun.

We provided 2,954 child spaces

234 children registered

73 parents and children enjoyed a day out at Washbrooks Farm

74 mucked in, come rain or shine, at our children's allotment,

198 joined in with our Christmas parties

20 joined us for a residential weekend to Knowles Tooth Family Centre

30 parents attended Family Support Groups.

53 volunteers helped run the project

FAMILY SUPPORT PROJECT

Working with schools in the central Brighton area to provide family support, promote positive parenting and organise Triple P Parenting classes.

This year saw the introduction of a Home Visiting Service alongside our on-site family support. Funding from the City Centre Cluster of schools had enabled us to work with more families on an intensive level as well as providing information and support to parents at the Centre. New in 2009-10 has also been a regular Dad's Drop-in, family workshops, a Triple P Parenting programme and low-cost therapies for families alongside the annual Knowles Tooth family holiday and the over-5's Christmas Party. The family support workers work closely with the crèche.

Family support to 42 families

31 children and parents attended family fun workshops

25 men involved in the dad's group



LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Trustees :

David Cuthbertson
David Allan
Matthew Armstrong
Michelle Harding
Peter Williams
Richard Connolly (Company Secretary)

Paid Workers:

Education	Peter Sutcliffe
Family Support	Suzy King
Food Project	Emily Humphreys, Helen Smith
Fundraising	Lisa Marshall
Caretaking	Peter Kalenkiewicz
Office Project	Mary Dunmore
Participation	Ellie Moulton
Playroom	Lesley Lewis, Judy Simon
Temp. Housing	Joy Rigby
Welfare Rights	Julie O'Hara

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- Tudor Trust
- BBC Children In Need Appeal
- Office of the Third Sector – Hardship Fund
- Lloyds TSB Foundation
- Stichting Benevolentia
- ESF/LSC Community Grants
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Henry Smith Charity
- Big Lottery Fund
- Community of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- Right Start Partnership
- Craggers Unemployed Climbers Group
- CRI Drug and Alcohol Team
- Community and Voluntary Sector Forum
- Working Together Project
- The Resource Centre
- The Early Childhood Project
- The Friends' Centre
- Mind
- Oasis
- Pre-School Learning Alliance
- Puffin Pre-School
- Tarnerland Nursery
- RISE
- The Social Justice Team
- St Nicholas Church
- Tarner Children's Centre
- Tarner Young People's Project
- The tarner and Eastern Road Partnership
- Pilbeams
- Giles Ings
- The Women's Centre



With special thanks to Lucy Jo Brown for her photographic work: see lucyjobrown.com for examples of her current projects.