



LEEDS BEREAVEMENT FORUM

Annual Report 2015-16

Our work

Established in 1996, Leeds Bereavement Forum is a small charity which works to develop and improve bereavement services in the city.

- We signpost individuals to the most appropriate bereavement service either locally or nationally. You do not need to be referred to us, our service is free and open to all
- We provide training, information, events and conferences to people who work in the area of bereavement to support their professional development. We work in partnership with organisations across the city to improve the provision of bereavement services
- We campaign to help people talk more openly about dying, death and bereavement and to make plans for the end of life. We work in partnership with Dying Matters nationally and locally

For more information please contact us to find out more about bereavement support available. The Forum is funded jointly by the three Leeds Clinical Commissioning Groups.

Membership

Membership of Leeds Bereavement Forum is free. To download an application form please visit our website or contact the office. A full list of members is available on our website.



Chair's report



As in previous years welcome to everyone and thank you for all of your support

through another very exciting and changing year within the Forum. As ever it continues to be both a privilege and a challenge to chair the Forum.

Much of my report is devoted to thank yous. As some of you will know, our long serving manager, Sue Watts retired early this year. She stayed on for a few weeks after our new manager Jane Robinson joined us in January to help Jane to acclimatise herself to the Forum's ways. Sue worked with us for many years and through many complex situations and supported and worked with us to lead many initiatives and we will always be grateful that she helped to build on previous initiatives to develop the Forum into a positive leading role in the field of bereavement in Leeds. Also this summer we lost Linda Bennett, our long serving administrative worker, who also decided to retire. I'm sure you will join me in thanking her too for all her hard work over the years and wishing them both well in their retirement.

We have also lost several of our longer standing trustees over the year, Christine Richardson, our treasurer retired at the end of last year and more recently we have received resignations from Gloria Hanley and Rhian Barnabas, again my thanks to all of them for their support throughout the years.

As you can imagine this has led to huge changes within the Forum, we have a new manager, Jane Robinson who has made many changes over the last 10 months and currently a temporary admin/finance worker Karen Sternbach who is providing much excellent work to cover whilst we review the staffing levels within the Forum.

You will note from the elections that we have several new trustees whom we hope you will vote in today including a new Treasurer, Joanne Dyson, who is already making an impact on the finances within the Forum. The other new people will also have much to offer and we are delighted to welcome them.

We also have a new commissioning manager, Linda McGowan, who I have not yet met but whom Jane has had contact with. I hope I will be joining their meetings and participating very soon.

Chair's report continued

As you can imagine things are changing rapidly, we are currently doing a trustee audit to help us to decide what extra skills are needed. We do need more trustees in light of the recent resignations and would particularly welcome colleagues with a professional interest in bereavement. We will welcome applications from you if you are interested so please think about joining us and speak to one of us, the expectations are not huge.

Today we are launching our new look website which we hope you will find even more useful than in the past. We also continue our support and involvement in the Leeds Dying Matters Partnership following successful Dying Matters events

I am sure Jane will explain to you about our new monthly lunchtime talks which are popular and have replaced the Special Interest Groups. We are having excellent speakers on a huge range of topics. We had a successful conference in the summer, different in focus from earlier ones when we looked at asylum seekers and refugees, lots of moving speakers and a choir, interestingly attracting many new people but fewer of our regular attendees.

We are already planning our next one for next year and the possibility

of a half day conference too.

Jane will no doubt also be telling you about her proposal regarding staffing the Forum in a different way so watch this space for more information there. It includes the possibility of an office move to accommodate the extra staff member plus possibly the two suicide workers, now in post but not together so lots to look forward to and we continue with our basic bereavement training alongside reviewing further training opportunities.

So more thank yous, to Jane for her enthusiasm, great ideas and hard work for the forum, to Karen for the excellent support she is providing for us, to all our trustees, both those who are retiring and those still with us for their commitment and hard work, to the CCGs and commissioning manager for their ongoing support in our work, to the team in Oxford Chambers for their help and of course, to all of you.

I look forward to our ongoing working together and the Forum's commitment to leading in bereavement support across the city. Thank you.

Sue Smith | Chair



Treasurer's report



I am delighted to provide my first report as the new Treasurer for Leeds Bereavement Forum.

Overall income received by the Forum during 2015/16 remained at a similar level to the previous year and is anticipated to remain stable through 2016/17.

Expenditure has been managed carefully and prudently. Whilst there was a slight deficit at the end of year (in comparison to a small surplus last year), this was mainly accounted for by planned investment in office IT equipment and improvements to the website. These changes should help improve access and visibility of our services to the general public.

Reserves remain at a healthy level and are not adversely affected by this small deficit.

Providing a high quality service

Leeds Bereavement Forum staff continue to provide a high quality service to our charity members and beneficiaries and have sufficient resources to carry out their functions effectively.

The financial accounts for 2015/16 have now been examined by WYCAS for accuracy and authorised by all parties. Copies are available on request. WYCAS will continue to offer advice and support when required.

Joanne Dyson | Treasurer



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April 2015 - March 2016

Events in 2015 began with our fourth annual Death Cafe held during Dying Matters Week in May, including Dementia Awareness training.

Later that month our annual conference 'How We Deal With Bereavement and Loss' looked at alternative ways to view bereavement. Artist Ellie Harrison presented her one-woman show from The Grief Series, Judith Hodgson from Dove House Hospice, Hull looked at death and bereavement in art, Jaqui McGuire from St Gemma's Hospice discussed ways to work with bereaved children and Ian Leech of St Giles Hospice, Lichfield talked about his work as Community Engagement Officer. This was one of our most successful conferences to date and delegates seemed to enjoy looking at different ways of addressing death and dying.

Training development

Three training sessions took place during the year, two Basic Bereavement Skill sessions hosted by Leeds City Council Adult Social Care and one new session requested by local childminders. This new session has been developed for people working with bereaved children and young people and helps to give non-specialised workers more confidence. Our Annual General Meeting in November focussed on 'Living with Dying: Death and Dying in Family Life, Britain 1900-1950' with Dr Laura King from the University of Leeds.

The Forum's Special Interest Groups have played an active role in raising awareness and bringing people together to look at ways of meeting unmet needs. One of the main achievements has been our involvement in the development and launch of Leeds Suicide Bereavement Service. Having been part of the Suicide Prevention Group and Task Group for many years it has been lovely to work with a group of dedicated people to develop a successful bid for this three-year project. The Forum receives a number of enquiries from people bereaved by suicide and it is good to have specialist, peer-led support to be able to refer them to.



What next...

It's been a busy and rewarding year since I joined the Forum in January.

In May we launched our new series of free monthly Special Interest Group talks covering a variety of subjects. The talks have grown in popularity and we plan to continue introducing new subjects into 2017.

Raising awareness

We held four death cafés during Dying Matters Week in May, three in learning disability-led venues and since September in partnership with Full Circle Funerals, we introduced a new series of monthly death cafés.

This June as part of Refugee Week, Leeds Bereavement Forum's annual conference examined how Leeds supports refugees and asylum seekers who have faced or are facing bereavement.

We had a great line up of speakers and received excellent feedback.

In November, we ran a series of workshops with

The Grief Series during Day of the Dead week, funded by Sport Relief Community Cash. The workshops were well attended and held in a variety of community locations across the city. Working in partnership with Time to Shine project at Leeds Older People's Forum we introduced a new half-day session, 'Bereavement - a lonely place' We hope to expand our training provision further in 2017.

Signposting support

We formally launched our new website and branding at our Annual General Meeting. We hope you like the new look?

In December, in partnership with Childhood Bereavement Network, we are holding a free one-day conference for Leeds Bereavement Forum members, 'Supporting children before a death - and supporting your service.'

We have lots coming up in 2017 so watch this space! Visit our website www.lbforum.org.uk, sign up to our email bulletin or follow us on Twitter @LeedsBForum.

Jane Robinson | Manager



Trustees

Sue Smith | Chair • Lynne Fordyce | Secretary • Joanne Dyson
| Treasurer • Rhian Barnabas (resigned October 2016) • Judy
Beckett (resigned November 2015) • Alison Bowes • Xina
Gooding Broderick • Gloria Hanley (resigned September 2016)
• Mark Hibbert • Christine Richardson (resigned November
2015) • Chris Woods

Get in touch

Leeds Bereavement Forum is only staffed part time. If there is no one to answer your call, please leave a message on the answer phone or email us – we will get back to you as quickly as possible.

Address

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