

*Celebrating 25 years*  
**1996-2021**



**ANNUAL REPORT**



**LEEDS  
BEREAVEMENT  
FORUM**

# Our vision

“I  
feel more  
confident in  
dealing with  
bereavement  
now.”

Established in 1996, this year we are proud to celebrate our 25th anniversary. Our vision remains to be the driving force behind improving bereavement services across Leeds.

- 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



Please contact us to find out more about bereavement support available. The Forum is funded by Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group.

## 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.



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# Our Training

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, we have delivered all our training online via Zoom. These sessions, led by our experienced trainers, are generally shorter and include the use of polls, break-out rooms and regular screen breaks.

Our training has continued to focus on an awareness that bereavement during the pandemic has been particularly difficult for many people. Deaths have often been sudden and unexpected. Limited funeral services and gatherings, difficulties in being with dying family or friends, as well as restricted access to their usual support networks, has led to very complicated bereavement experiences for many. We are looking forward to returning to face-to-face training, alongside our on-line sessions, in 2022.

## Our Training Courses

We can offer the following in-house training courses to help support people feel more confident talking about dying, death and bereavement.

### Basic Bereavement Skills | Half Day

Suitable for anyone working with bereaved people in a general setting, this session includes an introduction

to some bereavement theories, and a listening exercise.

### Intermediate Level Bereavement Skills | Half Day

A more in-depth look at bereavement for those with experience of working with bereaved people.

### Supporting people with Learning Disabilities through a Bereavement | Half Day

Delivered online for organisations supporting people with learning disabilities

### Bereavement Skills Training sessions

We are now able to deliver shorter sessions, including; **Providing Bereavement Support over the Telephone**, **Self-Care** and **The Impact of Bereavement during Covid-19**.

## Get in touch

All our online and in person training sessions can be delivered for up to twenty people and adapted to meet your needs. We try to keep our training low cost where possible, particularly for Leeds based voluntary organisations, please get in touch to discuss your training requirements.



# Chair's Report



As we look back over the last year it is hard not to be overwhelmed

with a great sense of pride at the achievements of Leeds Bereavement Forum, a result of the hard work and dedication of our staff and the work they undertake with others on behalf of all of our membership and Trustees.

The last 20 months has been an exceptionally difficult time for all of us, and particularly for anyone who has been bereaved. Staff have worked hard to support, develop and adapt as appropriate their work during this time. I would like to say a massive thank you to my former Co-Chair Mark Hibbert for his work as a trustee. We were very sorry, due to his heavy work commitments, to lose such a valued member of the Trustee board in November 2020.

## Funding

We are delighted that NHS Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group continue to fund our work. We thank the Commissioners for their recognition and, along with further funding grants that we have secured, we are pleased

that our work championing death, dying and loss in Leeds can continue.

## Training and development

Our already busy training and development programme has metamorphosed over the year to become completely online. Our training programme becomes more popular year-on-year and we have been delighted to work closely with many organisations this year, delivering new and bespoke packages. This vital work has only been possible through the hard work and creativity of our Development Worker Barbara, supported by our excellent trainers to ensure that the content and delivery of our training packages is of the highest standards.

## Looking ahead

Finally, we want to pay a huge tribute to Jane, Barbara and Kathy who work so hard to make all of this possible. Their dedication, compassion and creativity knows no bounds and we are so incredibly lucky to have such brilliant people working for LBF, with them our next year is sure to be as worthwhile and fruitful as the last.

**Xina Gooding-Broderick | Chair**

# Treasurer's Report



Leeds Bereavement Forum's fiscal position remained buoyant for the financial year that ended in March 2021.

The opening cash balance was £28,133. Total income for the period April 2020 to March 2021 was £72,855 and expenses were £60,986.



**"It was excellent training again. Well structured and delivered. Plenty of opportunity for participation and a really helpful reminder of the importance of self care both for ourselves and for the people we support."**

We secured funding of just under £10,000 from Leeds Community Foundation's Resilience Fund and £12,850 from our main funder the CCG. The additional funding enabled us to maintain some office overheads, update our IT hardware and software and increase staffing hours to enable the team to work productively from home. Total staff hours are currently 52.5 per week - equivalent to 1.4 full time workers. Staff did not work at our office premises at The Market Place at all during this period.

The cash balance at the end of the period 2020 to 2021 was £40,002 of which £4,827 is restricted for specific projects and £11,750 earmarked for additional staff hours for 2021 to 2022. Our reserves remain at £21,000.



## Thanks to the staff

Our staff and trainers can be thanked for the speedy development of our training from face-to-face to online delivery that steadily boosted income, as well as the procurement of the extra funding.

Joanne Dyson | Treasurer

# Our activities April 2020 - March



This financial year has been a year like no other.

Thanks to funding from Leeds Community Foundation's Resilience Grant we received in May 2020, we were able to immediately increase staff hours and buy new hardware so that all staff could work effectively from home. The funding also enabled us to extend the training section of our website, develop our training online and pay for Zoom which has been essential. Thanks too, to 100 per cent Digital Leeds who were able to provide us with a Chromebook.

## Signposting

We continue to signpost individuals and organisations to the most appropriate bereavement service either locally or nationally. This year we received 249 advice and information queries, an increase of 20 per cent on the previous financial year and up 36 per cent on our 2018-19 figures. Our e-bulletin continues to go out monthly alongside information on Twitter and Facebook and visits to our website continue to increase.

## Training

Our training has gone from strength to strength, we have run 20 training courses over the year, an increase on the previous year despite having to quickly adapt all our training provision to run online on Zoom due to the pandemic. Thanks to two-year funding from Leeds Community Foundation's Harnessing the Power of Communities, we have developed new training to support older people's organisations across Leeds to create their own peer bereavement support groups, which has been very successful and will continue into 2022.

## Encouraging conversations

Death Cafés are an international movement dedicated to encouraging discussion about death and dying in a relaxed environment. As with our training, all our Death Cafés moved online due to the pandemic. We held eight online Death Cafés this year, reaching 58 people. We have had participants from as far afield as Saudi Arabia, California, Sweden and Belgium as well as many people from Leeds.

“To say it was a zoom event, I was not waiting to leave.”

We have been approached throughout the year by several organisations outside of Leeds, including Cornwall, Essex, Gloucestershire, Hertfordshire, Oxfordshire, Sheffield, Staffordshire and Sussex for advice on how we work. As bereavement has moved to the forefront of many organisations' thoughts, we are definitely seen as a good practice organisation and were featured as such, in the guide to *'Setting up and running regional networks for bereavement organisations'* published by National Bereavement Alliance in July 2020

## Partnerships

We remain a key partner in the Dying Matters Leeds Partnership, facilitated by Leeds City Council. National Grief Awareness Week took place for its second year in December. Working with the Dying Matters Leeds Partnership, we were successful in running a story on BBC Look North about the week and also were able to light up prominent buildings in Leeds yellow.

Our Citywide Bereavement Services Forum has gone from strength to strength in the last year. Chaired by LBF, the Forum is made up of

third sector bereavement organisations across Leeds.

Pre-pandemic the group met twice a year in person, however, in the last financial year, we have met eight times via Zoom to feedback our experiences, give peer support and share best practice. This group proved invaluable at the beginning of lockdown when it was essential for us to speedily share our experience and knowledge with the NHS Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group newly formed *Leeds Post Covid 19 Bereavement Support Partnership Task Group*.

Supporting bereaved people has become even more important during this year and building on our partnership working with other third sector Leeds-based bereavement organisations; NHS Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group; Leeds City Council; Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust and all our partners across Leeds has become even more key than ever. At the end of the financial year, we received additional funding from NHS Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group to enable us to meet the increased demand for our service across the city.

**Jane Robinson | Manager**

# Trustees

Xina Gooding Broderick | Chair • Joanne Dyson | Treasurer •  
Satwant Rait | Secretary • Mark Hibbert (resigned November  
2020) • Simon Moran • Nadine Owens • Emma Pickering •  
Hillary Wadsworth (co-opted October 2021)

## Get in touch

Leeds Bereavement Forum is 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. To sign up to our monthly email bulletin please visit our website.

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**Facebook** | [www.facebook.com/LeedsBereavementForum](http://www.facebook.com/LeedsBereavementForum)

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