

Bridges Homeless Support (Newham)

Registered Charity no. 1150853

Annual Report 2014-15



Who are **Bridges**?

Bridges offers services to homeless and vulnerably housed people in Plaistow, London E13, and the surrounding area. We help service-users to bridge the gap between social exclusion and mainstream society. Our main activity is the provision of a free hot breakfast, and friendly, supportive conversation on Saturday mornings. We operate a second session on Monday directed at developing life-skills and positive outcomes. Bridges is an independent charity that grew out of the work of Memorial Community Church, Plaistow.

Who comes to **Bridges**?

Around 80 people come to Bridges each week. 517 different individuals accessed our services in 2014.



<http://www.bridgeshomelesssupport.org.uk/>
info@bridgeshomelesssupport.org.uk

What does **Bridges** do?

Bridges serves a hot breakfast and provides company and safety each week to around 80 homeless and vulnerably housed people. We also run a Monday drop-in. Additional highlights in 2014-15 included the times when we ...

- helped service users to **create artwork** on the theme of *Meaningful Moments in our Lives*
- took around 20 people on a **summer outing to the beach** at Shoeburyness
- hosted a **family Christmas Day**, inviting service users to a moving Carol Service, and serving a full Christmas dinner to over 100 service users



Bridges Partners in 2014-15 included ...

What You Do Matters and **Zuriel Foundation**, providing quarterly volunteer support and well-being services.

AirSport training enjoyed by service-users including one who boxed professionally in his home country.

NHS outreach nurse running regular assessment and health care sessions, while 20 service users attended **Newham TB Services** Mobile X ray unit (one was referred onwards and successfully completed treatment).

NEWway, who coordinate a borough-wide cold weather Night Shelter from October to the end of March.

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Bridges Staff

Bridges is delivered by dedicated volunteers. Around 25 individuals volunteered regularly in 2014-15 (4-8 each Saturday). Volunteer training included a session on working with those suffering from mental illness. Many faithful volunteers are former service users. Bridges is also grateful to the additional team who gave up their time to prepare and serve food for the Christmas party.

Bridges relies on the efforts of its unpaid project coordinators, Lesley Wildman (Monday) and Brian Dexter (Saturday). The charity is overseen by 5 Trustees and a management committee of 7. For 3 months in 2015 we employed David Whitworth as a Project Development Worker, whose work is shaping our plans for the future.

What our volunteers say about Bridges:

“Bridges is about continuity, relationships and safety. We’re dependably there for people.”

“It’s a lot of work to keep Bridges going week after week, year after year. It has been a big achievement for the people who are central to it.”

“The USP of Bridges is our welcoming, accepting and non-judgmental approach. I believe that we have the respect of our clients and they value the service provided.”

Bridges Plans for the Future

In 2016 Bridges will seek funds to professionalise our advice and advocacy work, and the mentoring support we provide to a small group of service-users on Monday. We intend continuing to operate our Saturday breakfast and to consolidate good relationships with local partners.

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Bridges Finances

Thank you to all our regular and one-off donors who make Bridges possible.

Thank you to all grant funders, especially **Transform Newham** and **Community Development Foundation**.

Summary of Bridges Statement of Accounts for 2014

Voluntary Donations (Gifts and one-off)	3,202
Regular Donations (Buy-a-Breakfast scheme)	780
Other Voluntary Donations	810
Grant Income	4,948
TOTAL INCOME	£9,739
Charitable activities (all running costs, inc. food and drink, Christmas event, etc.)	12,582
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£12,582
NET LOSS FOR 2014	£-2,843

In 2014, Bridges made a loss of £2,843. This was met by using unrestricted reserves in our account. In 2015 we are using remaining reserves to continue Bridges. Without additional income we will be forced to reduce or to close Bridges services. Please give to Bridges if you can!

How can you help **Bridges**?

We depend on **one-off and regular donations** to run week-to-week activities. Please give generously by going to our website and clicking the 'My Donate' button.

If you'd like to join the **Bridges team of volunteer staff**, please email Laura: info@bridgeshomelesssupport.org.uk

Bridges Trustees (2014-15): Richard Coulton, Brian Dexter, Tracey Gyateng, Jill McWilliam, Lesley Wildman.

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