



OASIS PROJECT

Help for women,
hope for everyone.



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Oasis Project is a charity working throughout Sussex to give **help** and **hope** to women, children and families affected by drug and alcohol problems.



Chairs' Report

It is with pride that we bring you this annual report which demonstrates the impact **Oasis Project** have made in 2018/19. The client stories within the report reflect the complex work of our organisation and its staff, and showcase the strides made by the people we work with towards addressing their problems with drugs and alcohol.

The fantastic team of staff and volunteers bring passion and commitment to their work every day and we're delighted that their efforts have been externally acknowledged by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in the rating they have awarded Oasis following their recent inspection. The service has been rated overall as "Good" with an "Outstanding" rating for responsiveness. The CQC describes responsiveness as "services that meet people's needs". The report noted that "People's individual needs and preferences were central to the delivery of services". It also noted the provision of support for children and young people – our Crèche and our Young People's Therapy Services – demonstrated outstanding practice. As Chairs we are delighted to feel assured that the community we serve are receiving such a good standard of care.



We'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who makes the work of Oasis possible through showing their support; financial or otherwise. The range of innovative services we offer is made possible by a broad range of funding streams. From the Charitable Trusts and Foundations whose support we have counted on for several years, to the people who have contributed individually, we really couldn't do it without you. In the next 12 months we have again set challenging targets around fundraising and hope that you will consider supporting Oasis in whatever way you can so that we can continue to meet the needs of those who turn to us for help and support.

Oasis has been here for 22 years and is stronger than ever, providing a unique, high quality, gender specific service in Brighton, Hove and East Sussex. Our ambition remains as clear as ever; to give help and hope to women, children and families affected by problems with drugs and alcohol. Not just for themselves, but for their families, their friends and their communities. For all of us.

Jess Taylor and Tina Favier, Co-Chairs



CEO Report

We have a new name and identity! After over **22 years** as Brighton Oasis Project we have decided that Oasis Project better reflects the work we do across all Sussex. We have done a lot of work in the past 12 months to summarise the work we do – developing core truths about our work and the people we work with and reviewing the values that underpin our work. We are using the core truths and illustrating them with an account of some of the people we have supported this year. I hope these give you a flavour of the work we do and the impact it can have.

Demand for our services continues to be high – many people continue to struggle in this climate of austerity. We have developed some new services in response to issues that are affecting our community. We were really delighted that as a result of campaigning over many years the needs of children of alcoholics have been recognised, we worked with Brighton and Hove Council to bid for money to develop new models of support for children and families with an alcoholic parent.



We know that one of the biggest barriers facing women getting support with a drink/drug problem is shame and stigma. Addressing this shame and stigma is part of what we do in telling stories about our work, we hope it makes people think and challenges how people are seen and spoken about.

Within the past year there has been an increasing focus on the number of people dying as a result of substance misuse. This is a real concern and whilst the causes of this are complicated there is no doubt that services are under pressure. We are facing real challenges in meeting the demand for services with a shrinking resource. Staff at the frontline are working with more people and we are often not able to provide the level of support we would like. Many drug treatments services now only deliver the core services that they are paid to deliver by local authorities, this is not the way Oasis works – we seek to raise funds to support the basic provision and to offer a service that can work with people holistically. It's not easy to raise these extra funds and we are really grateful to our charitable funding partners for their support, we are also dependent on the local community to support our fundraising activities. We hope that the impact of our work benefits not just the direct women and children we support but their families, their friends and all of us.

Jo-Anne Welsh, CEO



Anybody can develop
a problem with drink
or drugs – whatever
their **background** or
situation.



Danielle

An employee at Fulfilling Lives who has been in recovery for a year

My story

I'd had mental health issues since I was 14 and although I completed a biomedical sciences degree and entered postgraduate study, a severe eating disorder prevented me from being accepted to study for a PhD. I went to live in France and my eating improved, but I soon met a man who introduced me to drugs. We lived in a remote area with no opportunities and my addictions intensified, continuing for three years.

I realised that I needed help but I was scared of my ex-partner. After months of planning, I decided to leave him, return to England and work on changing my life for the better. Once in Brighton I went straight to Pavilions and from there I found Oasis. I've now been in recovery for a year, and started volunteering at Oasis before getting a job with Fulfilling Lives. I wanted to give hope to everyone that this mountain can be climbed.

**93 women
accessed our
Sex Worker's
Outreach Project
(SWOP) service
this year.**

It's changed how I relate to the world

Throughout my recovery I attended the peer support group that I now facilitate. Just going there and not being judged was amazing. The women related to each other but also saw that what we needed in recovery was different. I'd been a sex worker so felt much safer being in an all-women group. Seeing people in recovery – having role-models – was so positive and helpful. To begin with I was doubtful that I could get better, but I've learned so much through the service. I use the skills I've learned in everyday life now; it's integrated into my personality.

Not being judged and being treated with empathy in a safe space enabled me to change my life. I'm really grateful – without Oasis my life would have been so different. It's changed how I relate to the whole world. Before, my life was skewed to academic learning but there was always something missing; there was a big emotional gulf. Getting clean, learning how my mind works and opening up showed me I don't have to remain a victim.

You don't have to let your addictions, traumas or mental health issues define you. You can take control of your life again.

It is harder for
women to escape
drug and **alcohol**
problems – they
need specialist **help**.



Julie

A service user in recovery

My story

I ended up living in a refuge after I fled domestic violence and my daughter (now 15 months old) was taken into care. I had been addicted to drugs and found Oasis through the East Sussex Recovery Alliance. I was a complete wreck, but I've been clean for eight months now. My daughter might be put up for adoption so Oasis are also supporting me with the legal case and accompanying me to court.

It's given me my voice

If I hadn't found Oasis I think I would have ended my life. I didn't have a lot of options but having their support made me realise it's not the end. They've helped me find the voice I never knew I had. They taught me to never be ashamed of my story, and in the group there's no judgement; I have complete trust in them. They're like a little family you can rely on.

Oasis has always been there if I needed to talk or to see someone, and my keyworker was with me right the way through the whole process. I trust her with my life. They have helped me realise my self-worth and taught me a lot about self-care. I've found the confidence to believe I'm strong enough to stay clean and to feel that I am good enough. I've learnt assertiveness techniques, which can be difficult for some women.

321 people were care co-ordinated by Oasis' Adult Services this year. 26% of new clients identified as LGBT and 13% came from a BME background.

I know I'm classed as being high risk of self harm, due to the impending court judgement with my daughter, and it can feel scary. But it's so important for vulnerable people to have support – especially with something like going to court, where they can come with you. You need one person who believes in you, and that builds belief in yourself. I've come far in my journey, and I'm proud of that. I'm proud of where I am.

Drug and alcohol
problems don't
just affect the
individual – but
everyone around
them.



Cassie

An employee at Oasis whose mother was an alcoholic

I came to Oasis because I wanted to help a local charity. Oasis stood out because of their amazing core truths, plus they were women-only and they'd just got funding for children of alcoholics, who I really wanted to work with. After two sessions volunteering I've now got a job here.

My story

When I was four my mum met a violently abusive man and she started drinking. From then on I lost my childhood and became a carer. I had this big secret to keep.

We moved a lot; life was very chaotic. We didn't always have a home, and school was tricky – I struggled to make friends because I knew I'd be leaving soon, and sometimes no-one would come to collect me, so I'd have to make excuses for Mum. My granddad would swoop in and look after me for a while, following us around the country. My grandparents were my stability, and probably why I'm doing well today.

I was bullied because I was different. I was very withdrawn, scared of men, my clothes weren't always clean, and I didn't do PE because of the bruises. I thought I was the only one in the world experiencing it. The strain and stress really affected my health too; I was always getting ill. I felt my mum's pain all the time and carried it with me everywhere. I found it very hard to relax.

It's somewhere safe to come

I couldn't talk to anyone about what was happening. My main aim now, working with children of alcoholics, is to help those who struggle to speak out. Most children are afraid to tell their secret, and where the parents aren't getting help, they remain hidden.

There's so many different ways Oasis help families; it's such a welcoming place. As soon as they come through the door children feel they can relax. It provides positive role models and lets kids know they're not alone. It's somewhere safe to come. They can have a lovely time and stop being carers – stop worrying. They can just be children.

91 children and young people aged 5-18 years accessed 1:1 therapy in Brighton & Hove and Hastings this year. 23 young women 18-25 years accessed our Young Women's Therapy Service this year.

Drink and drug problems aren't just the **cause** of a difficult life, they're a **symptom** of one.



Charlotte

Children have attended the creche

My story

I had a difficult childhood – my dad was a violent alcoholic. I always had trouble with anxiety and suffered from OCD. When I was 20 I had my first child with my partner of two years, and I tried to create the perfect family life I'd never had. But we split up, and it devastated me. It was the last thing I'd wanted. I started using alcohol to numb my emotions. My new partner, who was also vulnerable, became violent towards me. I began self-harming and was admitted to hospital a few times. Social services got involved and my children went to live with my mum.

Something to look forward to

The only thing that was important to me was that my children didn't grow up to have the same problems I did. When I came to Oasis the creche meant there was someone to look after my children while I went to group sessions. My daughter still goes to the creche – she loves the staff and has a great time. My two other children go to holiday clubs and have individual therapy sessions. As well as helping them, this has given me time to clear my mind.

**86 different
children accessed
the crèche this year.
70% were open to
Social Services.**

My children have loved connecting with other kids who've had similar experiences. The holiday clubs are great for mothers who are struggling. They offer kids a routine, the chance to go to different places and have something to look forward to. Because of my children's experiences I know there's going to be fear, resentment and anxiety, but I hope that being able to explore this will give them the skills to process things and not hold on to negative feelings.

Without Oasis I wouldn't be in the position I'm in now, with my children coming back. With their support I've quickly turned my life around after a relapse. They've helped me so much, with practical things like letter-writing as well, and my key worker is always there to support me, whatever happens. When I'm engaged with them, I feel so much better; it takes the pressure off.

A bad **start** in life
doesn't have
to mean a
bad **end**.



Michael

Fulfilling Lives service user

My story

I had been doing well at school. I was intelligent but easily bored and began to go into town instead of attending lessons. I started stealing from shops and selling what I'd stolen, so I had a fair bit of money. I got in with a group of older friends who were all drug users, and I wanted to be like them – I thought they looked so dangerous and free. They didn't want to let me try anything but I wore them down and within just one or two months I found myself at the deep end.

For the next ten years I was in and out of prison, and my living situation was always difficult. I got sepsis after an operation following a bad fall, and I lost my leg. I don't have anywhere to live at the moment so I'm in hospital.

A half-normal life

I find it hard to trust people in authority but the Fulfilling Lives service don't judge you and you can be honest with them. They have done so much for me. My keyworkers got me to hospital appointments up in London, sorted train tickets I could never have afforded, arranged other appointments, got me out of bed and where I needed to be, and helped me navigate the minefield of all the agencies and different people you have to deal with. Ian visits me in hospital and comes to meetings so I know what's going on. Without him, I don't know what I would do. I never could have got my operation without Fulfilling Lives. I'd be on the streets without them. They do a powerful job; it's an essential service.

I'm fearful and anxious about the future: I'm disabled, have terrible injuries and I'm quite vulnerable. I'm just scared about how I'll manage without Fulfilling Lives when the funding stops. I don't know what I'd do on my own or where I'd live without help.

I just need to learn to live a half-normal life. It's never going to be perfect for me, I just need to keep myself above water.

We're not here to
'fix' anyone – we're
here to **help** women
make choices that
lead to **change**.



Trudi

An ex-service user now in recovery

My story

My partner developed a bad heroin habit and ended up going to prison. He got clean but eventually starting ‘touching’ again. And, like an idiot, I had a go, and that was it. When I fell pregnant I came to Oasis and was in treatment for nine and a half years.

When I relapsed Oasis didn’t judge me, they just said, ‘Ok, we can’t change that so how are we going to go forward?’ My keyworker would put this seed in my head, make me reflect back and answer my own questions. Of course you feel you’ve let yourself and everyone else down, but it’s the way they offer guidance and a positive structure that helped me push through.

**125 women
accessed Oasis
Women’s Recovery
Service (OWRS) in
East Sussex
this year**

A place that can work magic

You’re so lost when you come to Oasis – you think you’ve got things ticking over but really it’s chaos, and change is scary. It was such a rollercoaster but my keyworker was my rock. She never gave up, and checked in with me daily. She empowered me to believe I had the ability to change things. I felt hope instead of shame.

Without help I probably would have been wrecked off. I ended up loving coming to Oasis and it helped that it was a female group because no-one judges you. We could all relate to parts of other people’s stories. Once you start hearing people open up; you don’t feel so isolated. You relax and talk more. The group pulls strength from each other. It creates such a bond. For years I held everything in, but it’s so much better to talk because you start owning things and then you can move forward.

Oasis is a place that can work magic. It doesn’t matter what path brought you here. It doesn’t always work the first time, but Oasis persevered. I started volunteering, which gave me structure and helped me feel strong-minded. I’ve got a full time job as a project worker now, my girls are coming back next month after two years, and I wouldn’t have done any of that without Oasis. They’re brilliant.

We know that one size
doesn't fit all – we
look at the **individual.**



Denise

A mother of a service user

My story

My son, Andrew (37), is a drug user and has been accessing the Fulfilling Lives service for four years. He has complex mental and physical health problems and is in hospital at the moment. He's had one leg amputated due to his drug use and may lose the other too; he's wheelchair-bound as a result. After my marriage broke up we had to move Andrew from his private school to a local one. He was clever but bored and started misbehaving. Andrew began using drugs after he was excluded from this school and got into a bad crowd at the new school. He started bunking off and was introduced to marijuana and cocaine at the age of 15. We did everything you could possibly imagine to try to stop him, but from the age of 20 he has been addicted to heroin.

It's had a huge impact on the family. It's absolutely awful, like a living hell. I've been isolated by my friends, and my health has suffered due to the stress – I've had bouts of depression and every time I hear a police car I think they're coming to tell me he's dead. It's not easy getting up every day. I feel like I've been mourning my son for 15 years. It's unbearable to sit back and see your son's limbs being amputated.

It would be impossible to cope without them

Without our keyworker at Fulfilling Lives I couldn't look after not just Andrew but the rest of my family. It's so important to us. At first Andrew didn't trust his keyworkers but then he realised they weren't out to get him and instead were there to help him. He really likes his keyworker, Ian, now.

Ian is a lifeline for me: he tells me what's going on, gives me advice, chases all the different services, gets Andrew to appointments and is trying to find him somewhere safe to stay now. Andrew would be dead without this support. It would be impossible to cope without the service; it's essential for my family. It's like my oxygen.

Finances

Incoming resources from charitable activities

Unrestricted:

	Total £
Cranstoun	297,313
East Sussex County Council	130,572
Brighton & Hove City Council	108,776
Brighton Housing Trust Fulfilling Lives	10,608
CAF Bank Tourle Foundation	5,000
Santander Discovery Grant	4,648
Community of the Blessed Virgin Mary	3,000
Derek and Eileen Dodgson Foundation	2,200
Homity Trust	1,000
	£563,117

Restricted:

Brighton Housing Trust Fulfilling Lives	382,824
Department for Media, Culture and Sport	78,730
The Breadsticks Foundation	47,498
BBC Children in Need	31,273
Gilead Fellowship	28,340
Arts Council England	22,234
Bloom Foundation	20,000
Public Health England Innovation Grant	19,366
East Sussex County Council	14,608
Trusthouse Charitable Foundation	9,614
Barbara Ward Children's Foundation	6,159
Pebble Trust	4,915
Brighton District Nurses Association Trust	4,915
Wellcome Trust Grant	4,000
Lloyds Bank Foundation	3,500
Other grants <£1,000	250
	£678,226

Other:

Donations	23,529
Other Income	5,077
Investment Income	2,315

£30,921 **Total** **£1,272,264 (A)**

Expenditure

Staff Employment Costs	918,488
Staff Training, Recruitment and Other Supervision	32,394
Premises and Office Costs	14,387
Project Expenses	149,724
Depreciation	107,538
Accountancy and Professional Fees	2,825
Marketing, Publicity and Fundraising	67,178
	20,952
Total	£1,313,486 (B)

Net Income Over Expenditure For The Year

-£41,222 (A)-(B)

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S STATEMENT TO BRIGHTON OASIS PROJECT

I have examined the summary financial statement for the year ended 31 March 2019. In my opinion the summary financial statement is consistent with the full annual financial statements and the Trustees' Annual Report of Brighton Oasis Project for the year ended 31 March 2018.

Mr Darren Harding ACA, FCCA, DChA
for and on behalf of Richard Place Dobson Services Ltd.

Date: 15 Aug 2019

Oasis Project gratefully acknowledges funding and support from the following:

Arts Council England

Barbara Ward Children's Foundation

BBC Children in Need

Bloom Foundation

Breadsticks Foundation

Brighton and Hove City Council

Brighton Housing Trust

Brighton District Nurses Association

CAF Bank Tourle Foundation

Community of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Cranstoun

Department of Media, Culture & Sport

Derek & Eileen Dodgson Foundation

East Sussex County Council

Gilead Fellowship

Homity Trust

Pebble Trust

Public Health England

Santander Foundation

Trusthouse Charitable Foundation

Wellcome Trust

Our Board of Trustees:

Jessica Taylor

Chris Goss

Rachel Cashman

Daniel Chapman

Tina Favier

Gill Whensley

Clare Cochrane

Saleema Durgahee




For more information about our services or ways you can help, please get in touch.

01273 696970

info@oasisproject.org.uk

www.oasisproject.org.uk

 @OasisPrjct

 @Oasis_Project_

 @oasis_project_



Charity Number [1065503](#)

