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Spring/Summer 2021

What a year it has been. When the country went into lockdown for the first time more than twelve months ago, our lives changed dramatically nearly overnight. We are incredibly proud of our clients, who have stuck with us while we shifted our support online - and braved the feelings of fear, uncertainty and isolation that came alongside the pandemic.

As we move into spring and summer and restrictions start to ease, we are looking forward to re-opening Oakleaf HQ with Covid-19 safety procedures in place, welcoming back our clients and re-introducing the wide range of face-to-face activities and work-related training we have to offer whilst maintaining our virtual support.

We are currently offering a robust programme of support both via telephone and online, including wellbeing activities, IT training, workshops, support groups, one-to-one emotional support and counselling. Over lockdown, we also offered in-person one-to-one support meetings for those who were most struggling or isolated.

We continue to increase the variety of our virtual wellbeing activities and workshops and will expand our in-person offering once restrictions are lifted. We are now running 4-6 activities every day. Our most recent sessions include: Mindfulness, NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming), Fitness, Football, Walking Group, Anxiety Management, Craft and Chat, Scam Awareness Workshops, Choir, 1:1 coaching, Drama workshops, our Kickstart Wellbeing Course, our in-person Mental Health Support Group, Wildlife Photography and many more.

We look forward to resuming our Upholstery and Garden Maintenance training at Oakleaf as restrictions ease, in addition to offering our IT training courses in-person as well as online. You can view our current client calendar of wellbeing activities on our website with additional information regarding our services, health advice and guidance, which will be updated over the coming months as restrictions change.

If you have any queries or comments about our services, please do get in touch: info@oakleaf-enterprise.org.

WILDLIFE GROUP

During these extraordinary times our virtual Wildlife Group has helped form an online community for our clients.

Research suggests that a thriving, wildlife-rich environment can benefit both your physical and mental health. Here at Oakleaf, we aim to make our services, and particularly our virtual wellbeing activities, accessible to all.

You don't need to have access to large green spaces to experience your daily dose of nature; simply taking your dog for a walk or tending to indoor plants can have a positive effect on your mental health. Our Wildlife Group therefore enables us to bring nature to our clients; and our clients closer to the natural world.

One of our clients, Caz, suffers from anxiety and immersing herself in nature and wildlife has helped her feel happy and connected to this newfound community:

"We share stories, photos and experiences of animals, lovely outdoor spaces and horticultural projects – one I have been keeping everyone posted on is my herb garden!"

"Before now, I hadn't come across a support group where people shared my passion and were able to dedicate their time to discuss and share. I enjoy learning and seeing people smile – it helps me smile myself and really picks me up."

The group takes a lot of inspiration from The Wildlife Trust, but we are also very lucky to have Marina, an Oakleaf client who has previously lectured in wildlife at a local college and is therefore considered our 'fountain of knowledge' in all things wildlife.

"Guiding this group makes me feel useful. You are speaking to people in real-time, so it gives people something to think about aside from what's going on in the world right now."



NEW OAKLEAF PATRON: HM LORD-LIEUTENANT OF SURREY, MICHAEL MORE-MOLYNEUX

We are delighted to announce that HM Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey Michael More-Molyneux became the newest Patron of Oakleaf in October 2020.

Mr More-Molyneux has lived in Surrey all his life. Since his appointment as Lord-Lieutenant in 2015, he has been involved with an increasing number of charities and good causes, including his wonderful support of Oakleaf over the years.



MICHAEL MORE-MOLYNEUX

He will be joining fellow Oakleaf Patrons Dame Penelope Keith and Shaun Attwood. We very much look forward to working together for better mental health in Surrey as we move through 2021.

A CLIENT SHARES THEIR STORY

"I first heard about Oakleaf from staff at Farnham Road Hospital, who recommended it to me as a safe space to go to learn to connect with people who are dealing with similar circumstances to myself. At the time I was very withdrawn and suffering from severe social anxiety after a long period of isolation and depression. It took me a little while to work up the courage but eventually I went for a meeting with the Oakleaf team, and I am so glad that I did.

"The team were very friendly and understanding. They introduced me to their gardening training, which involved going out once a week with a group of other clients and volunteers to work at customers' houses. This was a great experience as it allowed me to work as part of a team and make friends all while learning new skills. It also added some structure to my week and gave me something to look forward to as well.

"I was able to take part in activities such as yoga, meditation, Tai-Chi, pilates and mindfulness which gave me the skills to manage my anxiety and depression as well as improve my physical health, which was not great when I started. Many of the people I met there are still my friends today.

"I was also offered a course of counselling which lasted 12 weeks and this helped me process thoughts and feelings in a safe space and gain perspective on my life.

"Since I left, the team have continued to contact me throughout these lockdowns to check that I am okay; their kindness and dedication to helping people has really changed my life. I continue to use the skills I learned at Oakleaf to manage my mental health, and as a result of my experience, I applied to college! I am now in my second year and training to be a therapeutic counsellor so that I can help people the same way that Oakleaf helped me. I cannot thank Oakleaf enough for the services that they provided for me and continue to provide for people who desperately need connection and support."

A big thank you to Russell Lewis for sharing his experience at Oakleaf.



MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING

We would like to say a huge thank you to the Guildford Pavilion for generously providing us with the Covid-secure space to host both our Adult and Youth Mental Health First Aid courses. To find out more about the training or if you would like to book your place, please visit our website or email jenclay@oakleaf-enterprise.org



CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

We conducted a Client Satisfaction Survey at the beginning of 2021 with feedback from our clients. It was fantastic to see such positive results!

"My activities over Zoom continue to be extremely valuable to my physical and mental health.

I have 'met' some terrific people, both clients and staff, and really value what they share, and what I learn."

"When I had a wobble after improving month on month, Oakleaf jumped in and put a weekly plan in place.

We talked on a one-to-one basis until my anxiety and worry was back under control."

"I have found that my involvement in the gardening team has been wonderful for my confidence work-wise. Working as a team and also getting used to actually doing a full, proper day's work. I enjoy gardening, and the knowledge and experience I am gaining is invaluable. Thank you."

In our January 2021 survey

95%

of clients agreed that **Oakleaf helped them feel less isolated**



In our January 2021 survey

87%

of clients agreed that **Oakleaf activities helped them feel more confident**



In our January 2021 survey

92%

of clients agreed that **Oakleaf helped them improve their mental wellbeing**



COUNSELLING SERVICES

We are very pleased that our counselling department has expanded since the beginning of last year.

Between April and December 2020, we increased our counselling team from 10 to 16 and held almost 800 counselling sessions, which is more than the whole of the previous 12 months.

Our counselling services are now available in the evenings and at weekends as well as during the weekdays, and our waiting list has reduced significantly. To find out more, please visit our website.

2020 CHRISTMAS CARE BASKET APPEAL

Many clients live alone without family nearby, and every year we normally hold a client Christmas party to bring the Oakleaf family together and celebrate. This sense of community is always so important but unfortunately due to Covid-19, we were unable to hold our annual party.



Instead, we organised the production and delivery of hundreds of Oakleaf Christmas Care Baskets for clients, including a variety of delicious festive treats such as mince pies, crackers, chutney, chocolate, cordial, and hot cocoa as well as games,

trivia and puzzles. This was intended as a small gesture to show our clients that they were cared for and had not been forgotten during a particularly challenging festive season.

In the end, we were touched by the generosity of 80 sponsors, which enabled us to prepare 300 baskets, and by the dedication of 32 volunteers who helped make up and deliver the baskets over the first two weeks of December.

Thank you so much to all of the wonderful businesses, organisations and individuals who chose to sponsor a basket, and all of the volunteers who worked extremely hard to make sure all of the baskets were delivered to clients in time for Christmas. We could not have completed the project without our fantastic delivery teams, including Kelly's Storage, Woking Rotary and Guildford Cricket Club members!

"I just wanted to say how overwhelmed I was when I saw the wonderful hamper on my doorstep. It's just so lovely and cheered me up so much. I want to give a big thank you to all involved in delivering them and making them up!"



10TH ANNUAL OAKLEAF QUIZ NIGHT

While we were unable to host our 10th Annual Quiz Night in-person this year, we decided to take it online in the form of a 'Virtual Takeover' on Thursday 25th February.

We hoped the event would help to lift people's spirits as we continued through the third national lockdown. Well done to all 120+ individuals and 20 teams who took part. We had a fantastic evening and managed to raise over £2,000 - an incredible amount!

In addition to the quiz itself, we hosted a grand raffle with prizes from: Mandira's Kitchen, Gail's Bakery, Plough Produce, Chilworth Manor Vineyard, The Royal Oak, Cook, Crema Coffee, Guildford Shakespeare Company and Bike Bros. So, a big thank you to all of the local Surrey businesses who very kindly donated to our raffle.

Following the success of our original Covid-19 'lockdown quizzes', we will continue hosting our popular virtual quizzes every few months. To date, we have managed to raise more than £6,000 from virtual quizzes since the first lockdown began last year.

To find out more about our next quiz, email: jenclay@oakleaf-enterprise.org or for more information, visit our website. Everyone is welcome!



We are delighted to announce a new corporate partnership with Surrey/Tyne and Wear-based C&C Group. They provide market leading software solutions and products in the cloud to national UK critical infrastructure companies operating in the electricity, gas, water and pharmaceutical sectors.

Through the partnership, C&C Group will help fund essential aspects of mental health and wellbeing support at Oakleaf over the next year. We look forward to working together for better mental health in Surrey. A huge thank you for your support!

VIRTUAL LONDON MARATHON

We are extremely pleased that Oakleaf has been successful in securing charity places in the 2021 Virtual Virgin Money London Marathon! The event will take place on Sunday 3rd October and is set to be the world's first 100,000-person marathon with virtual participants from around the globe as well as those on the traditional course in London. This year, virtual participants will have between 00:00:00 to 23:59:59 to complete the marathon (26.2 miles) on the course of their choice. All finishers will receive the coveted official Virgin Money London Marathon medal and T-shirt. If you would like to join #TeamOakleaf in 2021, please visit the Events page on our website or contact Jen:

jenclay@oakleaf-enterprise.org

"My confidence in myself and self-worth have really improved. I feel that there is somewhere I can go, be totally myself and feel supported."

"Oakleaf has helped me feel less isolated and I find that their mindfulness sessions put me in the right mindset to face any problems."

"I can be me with all my issues and difficulties and still feel normal and not feel that I have to hide behind a mask."

PATHWAYS TO WORK



Oakleaf has been awarded funding by the National Lottery Community Fund to deliver a new, three year project. This project will start in May and will focus specifically on delivering tailored training and mentoring for clients, supporting them to move forwards into work. With the employment market being so challenging at the moment, we are pleased that this project will provide expert assistance for Oakleaf clients to prepare for work and move into new roles with confidence, qualifications and support.



THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL HEALTH

The Charities Aid Foundation published an interesting article on 5th March, summarising the impact of Covid-19 on charities across the country. Key findings include that the public respect for and trust in charities, has increased, at a time when press coverage has demonstrated clearly the need for charitable work on the 'frontline'. There has also been an increase in society's wish to help others. At Oakleaf the dedication of our own 'frontline' Client Services team has certainly been inspirational.

We are encouraged by the country's new-found acknowledgement of the importance of mental health. So many people, locally and globally have been challenged by the impact of the pandemic on mental wellbeing.

The CAF report also highlights the deferred recessionary impact of the pandemic saying that the economic impact will be felt for at least 5 years. With our self-generated income from gardening and upholstery severely reduced, and event fundraising impossible during the pandemic, at Oakleaf we expect 2021-22 to be a financially challenging year.

If you are considering making a will in 2021 (or updating your existing one) and value the charitable work which Oakleaf undertakes for the mental wellbeing of local people, please (having made provision for family and friends) do consider including a gift to Oakleaf in your will.

Although we cannot provide legal advice, for any questions please do not hesitate to contact Moyra Matravers:

moyramatravers@oakleaf-enterprise.org

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Our Gardening and Upholstery departments create skill-based training for our clients and also sell services to the public, enabling Oakleaf to generate additional income.



GARDENING: Whether it's a large or small garden, private communal grounds or commercial property, our gardening team provides a first-class service, whilst giving our clients opportunities to complete their training in gardening.



UPHOLSTERY: Based in central Guildford, our upholstery studio brings new life to furniture and soft furnishings. Skilled workmanship is overseen by our Master Upholsterer with all income being re-invested back into helping our clients.

OAKLEAF
AT HOME
Beautiful design for better wellbeing

We are excited to be launching a new social enterprise later this summer. Oakleaf At Home will offer a range of home accessories

and hand-crafted soft furnishings – every piece is crafted using original artwork, created by our clients. 100% of proceeds will be reinvested into Oakleaf to help fund our counselling services, wellbeing activities and work-related training. The enterprise aims to create paid roles for Oakleaf clients that could act as a stepping-stone to future employment. The development of the enterprise is, in part, being funded by the Inclusive Recovery Fund, UnLtd, DCMS, Comic Relief and the Enterprise Development Programme. Look out for the official launch date on our website and social media – 'beautiful design for better wellbeing'.

We are incredibly thankful for all our supporters and will continue to do all we can to look after the mental health and wellbeing of the Oakleaf community.

If you are able to make a donation to Oakleaf and help fund vital mental health, employment and wellbeing support, we would be most grateful. If you are interested in supporting Oakleaf in any way, please get in touch by emailing:

jenclay@oakleaf-enterprise.org

or phoning:

01483 303 649

For updates on Oakleaf and all things mental health, be sure to follow us on social media:



@_Oakleaf



@Oakleaf_Enterprise



Oakleaf Enterprise



Oakleaf

Website: www.oakleaf-enterprise.org

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oakleaf 
MAKING LIFE WORK WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

NEWS



Outstanding Support in the
Community Award 2020