

RBKares (charity number 1197621)

We knew from the first RBKares wellbeing day at the foodbank on the Cambridge road estate in May 2022 that there was a desperate need for dentistry. When we offered the clients apples, they politely declined while showing their teeth - or lack of them! This set us on the path to find a way of helping the clients access dental care. NHS dentists taking on new clients are really rare, the King's Hospital Outreach team has no capacity and 111 or A&E simply treat infections and give out Painkillers. Following an introduction to dentist Dr Munir Ravalia (ex deputy Mayor), we set up a triage clinic in March to assess the dental needs in this vulnerable group. This gave us an insight into the dire dental problems that these people are living with and what they do to ease the chronic - often unbearable pain. It also gave us some data to support our successful application to The Brothers Trust grant which enabled us to book the Dentaid Dental Charity bus for the minimum four sessions Dentaid require. On Thursday 3rd August Dr Ravalia was the volunteer dentist on the Dentaid bus at our first clinic. 11 clients had oral cancer checks and clean ups, 6 X-rays, 5 fillings and 8 extractions. We are incredibly excited to have brought this project to fruition. The second Dentaid clinic is on Tuesday 5th September and will be part of our Wellbeing day.

Our monthly Wellbeing drop-in sessions at the Cambridge Road Estate foodbank (an area in the bottom 10-20% of deprivation in the country) are fast becoming a recognised event that enables services and charities to connect with hard to reach clients. By working with local services and charity partners we maximise our impact and are able to provide some of the services that clients desperately need such as Mind, Samaritans, Podiatry services, Health checks, NHS vaccination team, Kick-it smoking cessation service, Dr Bike, Fuel vouchers, Simcards from Superhighways, Kingston Council Benefits support team, Kingston Council Employment and Skills team working with 'We are Digital' - digital inclusion, Adult Education, The Dentaid Dental bus and a one off Specsavers visit.

The needs of these clients are complex and varied. Providing services on-site and available right where they are, has a transformational impact on their lives. The clients are often unable to follow up or commit to appointments or have language difficulties. We are empowering clients to access varied resources and tools we give them to help themselves particularly during the cost of living crisis. These events bring a wonderful positivity and are a cost-effective, synergistic way of supporting the clients. One guest arrived adamant he didn't need help, but, after gentle encouragement, he had a flu jab and covid booster, got a long term foot concern tended to and applied for benefits he didn't realise he was entitled to. In our survey, 91% of clients said that Wellbeing days had made a positive impact to their lives. To quote Vicky Bourne from Mind *'The Wellbeing days on CRE where organisations come together to offer a variety of support has been one of the most positive community initiatives I have ever been involved with'*.

RBKares aims to make Kingston a kinder place to live. The leading article in this month's The Doctor magazine entitled 'Why be Kind' shows how kindness has the potential to improve performance and clinical outcomes. Being kind to our vulnerable clients allows them to ask for help when in difficulties and I think our Wellbeing day epitomises this.

