



Sitting on Effra Road is Mosaic Clubhouse, a mental health service offering a unique approach for individuals who are going through recovery or are yet to reach this stage.

It is a place of comfort and encourages its members to build a stable life again, whether this is from the external courses that Mosaic organises, or simply by being part of a community where you are never made to feel alone.

I'm sure if you live in Brixton or have passed through, you would have either seen or heard about Mosaic.

But, in case you haven't, Mosaic has been here in Brixton since 1994. It is a charity that is partly funded by Lambeth council and local NHS services.

Mosaic works in an extraordinary way. Staff numbers are deliberately kept to a minimum so that Mosaic members help to complete daily and long-term tasks. These working foundations help to encourage a sense of belonging for all.

Tasks are divided into three main units. These are business and administration, employment, education and information, and café and garden.

In each unit, members build up skills needed for job opportunities, future employers, education and housing.

For example, the café and garden unit provides the food for Mosaic's canteen. Here members can help out in the kitchen, preparing daily food and drink for the café. Members learn how to cook healthy meals for their selves and others.

At the annual general meeting in November 2019, Mosaic chairperson Lucy Hastings explained: "We are part of a really effective global movement".

Mosaic is based on an international model, with the majority of clubhouses located in northern America and Scandinavian countries.

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# A place of comfort and encouragement

Despite being part of a global movement, Brixton's Mosaic Clubhouse is unique in England. **Ruby Gregory** investigates

Mosaic is a training base for international clubhouse staff with recent visitors from Israel, Sweden and Norway.

So it is surprising to learn that there are only two clubhouses in the whole of Britain; Mosaic in Brixton, and Flourish House in Glasgow.

Mosaic is a charity and relies on donations from sponsors found in Brixton. It also hosts its own fundraising events and activities.

Looking for an explanation as to why only Lambeth hosts the only clubhouse in England, after two visits to Mosaic, I concluded that to open and maintain a clubhouse, there needs to be a combination the right resources, accessibility and exposure.

However, I experienced for myself what the brilliant staff and members accomplish in Brixton and believe it can be an example for people in other areas who want to follow in the footsteps of Mosaic.

The annual general meeting was a celebration of the past year's achievements and plans for the year to come. Members of the board provided statistics including the annual recorded attendance of its members, which was 647 members from April 2018 to March 2019, with 80 people visiting daily.

Lambeth councillor Ed Davie, cabinet member for health and adult social care, was also there and expressed his appreciation to Mosaic and its community. Staff and members from units and committees presented their yearly findings,

followed by questions.

The Evening Sanctuary was also highly praised at the meeting. The Sanctuary is a place where individuals can come for instant support at night, which can be lonely and difficult for some.

It is run by volunteers from 6pm to 2am for seven nights a week, with Wednesday, Thursday and Friday being its busiest nights. Currently, an impressive four volunteers keep The Sanctuary running.

The meeting demonstrated what a great place Mosaic is. My next visit showed me the dynamic improvements that Mosaic has made to its members lives.

Jamille, 25, has been a member for over a year and was initially referred by a mental health team.

He explains that on his first day, it was nerve wracking: "When I came here I had confidence issues – a mental health breakdown set me

back with confidence issues".

Fast forward a year and Jamille enjoys coming to Mosaic three to four days a week. It has helped him form a good routine and he has now built up his confidence with public speaking.

Jamille has an ongoing short story feature in Mosaic's fortnightly newsletter In The Mo. He also has a huge interest in radio presenting and podcasts, and frequently reviews musicians and albums on the Mosaic Music Magic Podcast.

He wants to be a primary school teacher in the future. He also contributed to Stephen Rudder's recent Black Men's Minds exhibition at Brixton's Black Cultural Archives.

Anne, 53, has been a member for seven years, after experiencing mental health problems for three decades.

The idea of Mosaic was originally daunting to Anne, but she now attends two to three days a week, spending all day here. Anne says staff "fall over themselves in here to help you, it's amazing".

Anne loves to give back to the community, and often takes part in voluntary work. Every Friday,

**A progressive outlook on mental health and a positive shift into rehabilitation, demonstrating that life can get better after a downfall**

she helps people with learning disabilities at The Multi Activity Centre (MAC) in Tulse Hill. She has also advanced her education and completed an ICT course at Lambeth College.

"Reach out" is a task that Anne likes. She contacts members who have few family or peers around and reminds them about events that are happening at Mosaic. "It's as important to have members as it is to have members of staff," she says.

Inpatient Outreach is another important responsibility for Anne. It sees staff and members visiting Lambeth Hospital to tell patients about the opportunities at Mosaic.

She explained that the clubhouse model is something we need more of in Britain, and hopes that Mosaic will go on to achieve "bigger and better things" in the future.

Mosaic is a wonderful place where a community is thriving. It promotes a progressive outlook on mental health and a positive shift into rehabilitation, demonstrating that life can get better after a downfall.

Mosaic's daytime hours operate Monday to Friday 9am-5pm. The evening sanctuary is open Monday to Sunday from 6pm to 2am. For more information contact Mosaic directly on 020 7924 9657 or [infohub@mosaic-clubhouse.org](mailto:infohub@mosaic-clubhouse.org).

Mosaic Clubhouse, 65 Effra Road, SW2 1BZ,



A friendly welcome at reception