



brighton  
natural  
health  
foundation

Annual Report  
2023-24



*healthy communities, healthy city, healthy planet*

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## who we are

**Brighton Natural Health Centre** (BNHC) was founded in 1981 with a focus on promoting the benefits of all-round health for body, mind and planet. The charity delivered high quality, low-cost, accessible health and wellbeing classes in our central Brighton studio for more than 40 years, as well as outreach classes, including for refugees, people with learning difficulties and women who had experienced domestic violence.

Over four decades later, we have taught over **100,000 classes** to more than **ten thousand students**, giving us a firm foundation of practical experience in delivering mindful movement and witnessing its benefits.

When BNHC originally opened, it was the only such place in the city, but BNHC's pioneering work has also helped spark a city-wide revolution where there are now many studios, businesses and organisations working in every corner of the natural health sector. However, these organisations and studios cluster towards the centre of the city and away from areas of high deprivation where the need is greatest.

To fill this gap, and with its initial goals successfully achieved, BNHC decided to close its studio in January 2023 and relaunched as **Brighton Natural Health Foundation** (BNHF) in June of the same year with our Towards a Healthy City event, attended by nearly 100 stakeholders.

We are now dedicated to making mindful movement accessible throughout the city, focussing on delivering inclusive, high-quality classes in areas of high need and health inequality.

## our values


**BNHF** is committed to supporting individual health and wellbeing, fostering resilient and thriving communities and contributing to a sustainable, healthy planet. In working towards these aims, we prioritise the highest ethical standards.

**Inclusion:** We cultivate safe spaces that respect and celebrate diversity in all its forms, including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. We acknowledge that this is an ongoing journey and we are committed to continuous listening, learning and growth.

**Empowerment:** We support individuals and communities to achieve greater autonomy over their health and wellbeing and believe that empowered communities are key to a healthy and thriving society.

**Transparency:** We are dedicated to maintaining transparency in all our operations and decisions. We hold ourselves accountable to our stakeholders and the communities we serve.

For our full ethical statement, please visit: [www.bnhf.org/about/](http://www.bnhf.org/about/)



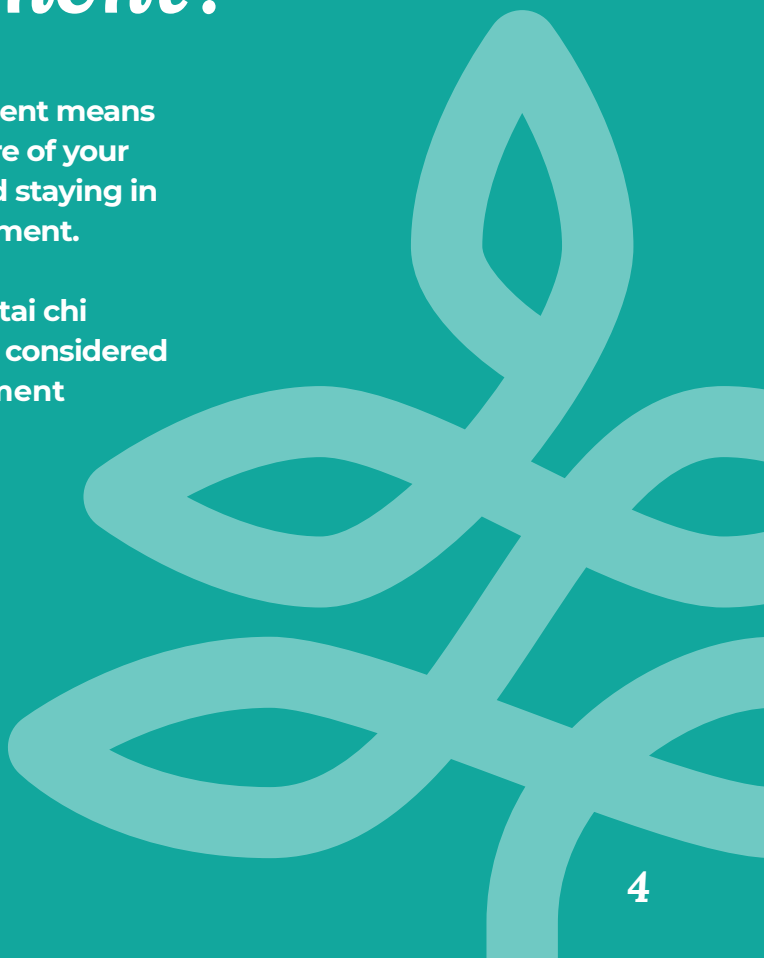
Pilates  
Nice stretching  
breathing  
Lovely class

Teacher  
yale

# *what is mindful movement?*

Mindful movement means being fully aware of your movements and staying in the present moment.

Pilates, qigong, tai chi and yoga are all considered mindful movement practices.





## what we believe

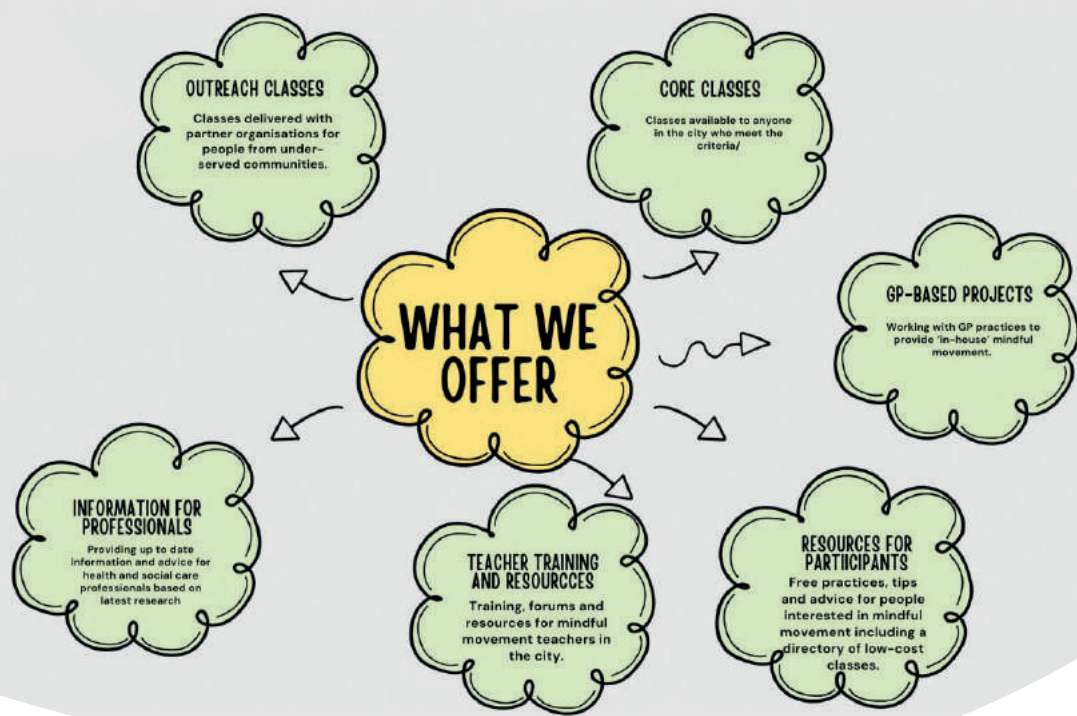
At **Brighton Natural Health Foundation**, we're passionate about mindful movement and its benefits for health and wellbeing. Our role, backed by solid experience and expertise, is to help connect people into these benefits.

**Our mission is simple:**

*to make mindful  
movement accessible  
to everyone*

We are also committed to working in partnership to deliver wider elements of natural health including nutrition, nature connection and massage.





## what we do

We support communities to embrace mindful movement for a happier healthier lifestyle, as well as providing a trusted source of expertise, advice, training and education in mindful movement and related practices.

## why mindful movement?

Mindful movement plays a vital role in reducing stress and improving health. Moving mindfully encourages present-moment awareness, which in turn lowers stress hormones, leading to a calmer mind and a healthier body.

# meeting the health needs of the city

Health inequalities in Brighton and Hove are stark and troubling. Men in the most deprived areas of the city die nine years younger than their counterparts in wealthier areas. We believe that mindful movement has an important role to play in addressing these disparities.

Working closely with public and community health teams, we have identified the health needs of the city and targeted our classes where they will make the most difference.

Conditions that pose the greatest burden in the city include: heart, musculoskeletal and mental health problems. Mindful movement has been scientifically proven to benefit all of these. We are focussing our services in Hangleton, Whitehawk, Moulsecoomb, Hollingbury and Woodingdean – all areas of high deprivation with corresponding health inequalities.





# key achievements

## mindful movement outreach classes

We have run several courses in areas of high need, working closely with community partners, including:

- **Whitehawk Over 50s** group
- **Hollingdean Community Centre**
- **South Asian Women's Group, Cedars Housing Association**
- **Downsman Wellbeing Centre Community Group**
- **Carers Centre** for people caring for people with mental health difficulties
- **Rise** for women experiencing domestic violence
- **Together Co** monthly classes for people experiencing loneliness

*These classes have reached more than **150 individuals** who would not normally have accessed classes.*





### mindful movement core classes

We also run two 'core' classes open to anyone in the city who meet the criteria:

- **online chair yoga** for people with chronic fatigue
- **yoga for women** who have experienced trauma

### online courses

We offer three recorded online courses by respected teachers including:

- **qigong**
- **somatic yoga**
- **yoga for menopause**

You can find these on the learning section of our website:

<https://learn.bnhf.org/>

## class directory

We have a small but developing directory of trusted teachers throughout the city on our website who deliver low-cost, inclusive classes.

## awareness raising events

We have had a presence at several city-wide events, running stalls and taster classes, including:

- **Strong, Steady and Independent** (Healthy Lifestyles Team)
- **TAKEPART** (Healthy Lifestyles Team)
- **Carers Festival** (The Carers Centre)
- **Brighton Yoga Festival**

*This gave us the chance to talk to more than 200 people allowing us to raise awareness of the benefits of mindful movement as well as learning about the needs and wishes of communities.*



## training and development for teachers

We have created training and development opportunities for mindful movement teachers so they are well-equipped to work in community settings. We have:

- Delivered training sessions on: working with the LGBTQIA+ community and working with survivors of domestic violence.
- Planned a training programme for 2024/25 including: racial literacy and hypermobility.
- Created online recorded sessions on safeguarding and working in communities.
- Created a section of the website dedicated to teacher development.

**100% of participants  
said they found our  
training useful and  
relevant**

**100% of participants  
said they would do  
something differently  
as a result**

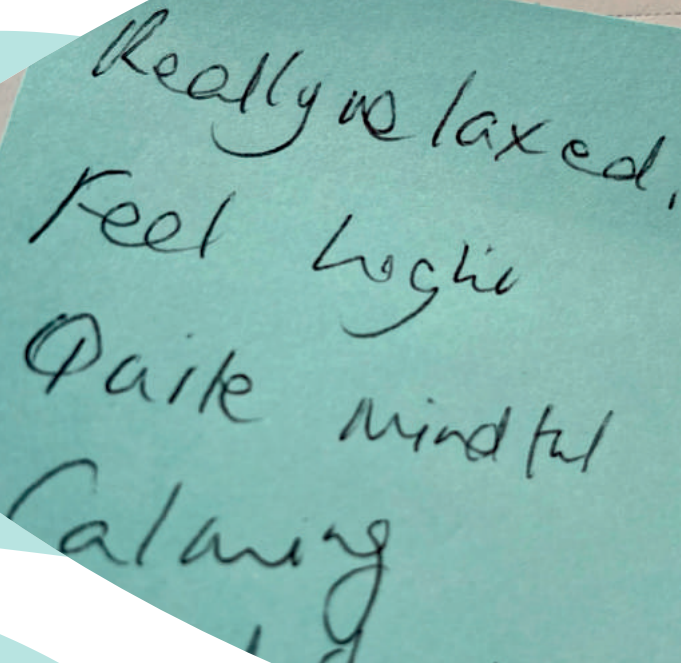


## partnerships with GP surgeries

We forged strong connections with GP surgeries in the East and Central Primary Care Networks throughout the city.

This has resulted in:

- Free courses and taster days in qigong and mindful movement for people with chronic health problems throughout the city.
- Information leaflets about mindful movement in waiting rooms in nine GP surgeries in the east of the city.



Really relaxed,  
Feel Logic  
Quite mindful  
Calming



## community partnerships and development

Partnerships have been key to the success in developing our programmes. We work closely with key community stakeholders to avoid parachuting in services that are not wanted or needed.

Our partners include:

- **The Trust for Developing Communities**
- **The Carers Centre**
- **Rise**
- **Together Co**
- **The Hangleton and Knoll Project**
- **Healthy Lifestyles Team**
- **The Sussex Inclusion Health Network**
- **Active Ageing Alliance and Primary Care Networks**
- **HERA**
- **East and Central Primary Care Network**
- **Goldstone Primary Care Network**



# feedback

We have received excellent feedback from both professionals and participants:

*“The session was BRILLIANT.... Participants really valued the mix of practice with education around the breath and left with useful ideas to use themselves,”*

**Health and Wellbeing Coach Goldstone PCN**

*“When I feel anxious at home, I do the simple movements you showed us and it reduces my anxiety,”*

**Participant, Whitehawk Group**

*“This weekly class of yoga is the highlight of my week. I appreciate so much having an hour to focus on me, to empty my mind and relax amongst friends. I always leave feeling better.”*

**Sarah, Carers Centre Class**

*“The Mindful movement ...has improved their health and wellbeing and it has been inclusive and accessible to all members, including participants who struggle with additional mobility needs. The members always look forward to the next session”*

**Older People's Participation Worker Trust for Developing Communities**

*“I had a health check and previously had high blood pressure -it’s now almost normal- maybe I’m training myself to relax more! Thank you!”*

**Tricia, Carers Centre Class**

*“Although the last few weeks have been extremely stressful at home, this weekly yoga session has stabilised me emotionally. I’ve loved the slow breathing and use that daily now.”*

**Participant, Carers Centre Class**

*“I have long term mental health difficulties and this class feels like a good space for me to be in.... It can feel like a brain hug!”*

**Participant Women’s Trauma Class**

You can read about our taster day at the Downsman Wellness Centre and an evaluation of our Yoga for Long-Covid project at **[www.bnhf.org/news/](http://www.bnhf.org/news/)**

# impact and outcomes

- **Reaching under-served communities:** we have provided a valuable resource for emotional, physical and mental health improvement to people who might otherwise not have access.
- **Increased awareness:** our participation in community events, partnership work and social media posts have raised awareness about mindful movement, its benefits and the work of the charity.
- **Enhanced practitioner skills:** our training has ensured that our practitioners are well-equipped to deliver effective classes, thereby better meeting the needs of the community.
- **Healthcare integration:** Collaborating with GP surgeries and local health partnerships has allowed us to integrate mindful movement into broader health and wellness strategies and laid the foundations for future collaborations.



## the future

This has been an exciting and dynamic first year for BNHF. We are delighted by our successes and have learned so much from our participants and community partners.

We have seen first-hand the benefits that mindful movement brings to communities and believe it has an important role to play in reducing the health inequalities that persist in the city.

We are looking forward to embedding and developing our services to help make mindful movement accessible to all and allow communities to flourish.





## funding

We are very grateful to our funders: **National Lottery, Sport England** and **Sussex Community Foundation** for making this work possible.



We would also like to thank **Phoebe Wyss**, whose generous donation was given to continue the legacy and vision of her husband **John Kapp**, and this has provided BNHF with a solid financial base from which to develop its outreach programme.

For further information on our finances, please visit the **Charity Commission website** to view our accounts.



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**[www.bnhf.org](http://www.bnhf.org)**

**[hello@bnhf.org](mailto:hello@bnhf.org)**

or call on **07740531250**

or follow us on instagram

**[@brightonnaturalhealthfound](https://www.instagram.com/brightonnaturalhealthfound)**

