

INTEGRATED CARE FUND (ICF) REPORT

JULY 2021 – JUNE 2023

Prepared by:
VASLan



TABLE OF CONTENTS

[02](#)

Background: What are the priorities of the fund and what are we expecting to achieve?

[03](#)

Who is being funded and what are their priorities?

[05](#)

Priority 1

[17](#)

Priority 4

[11](#)

Priority 2

[18](#)

Priority 5

[16](#)

Priority 3

[20](#)

Priority 6

[22](#)

Medium-term outcomes and evidence

[24](#)

Case studies

BACKGROUND

The 2021-23 round of the Integrated Care Fund (ICF) was allocated £1.3m for the two-year period, with £1,265,184 of this awarded to the third sector in grant funding.

Integrated Care Fund Priorities – 2021 – 23

- 1 - Encourage people to safely re-engage in their community through regular social contact and outdoor activities.
- 2 - Reduce social isolation, support people to build their confidence and resilience to remain active and independent.
- 3 - Build the capability and quality of social enterprise in supporting health and social care.
- 4 - Identifying and targeting those people who are at risk of admission to hospital, providing appropriate information, support, and developing non-medical care pathways in the community.
- 5 - Develop wider collaborative local support for people in poverty or those whose health is impacted by unemployment and financial uncertainty.
- 6 - Help to improve mental health and wellbeing by delivering initiatives that reduces mental health stigma and/or supports people in their community.

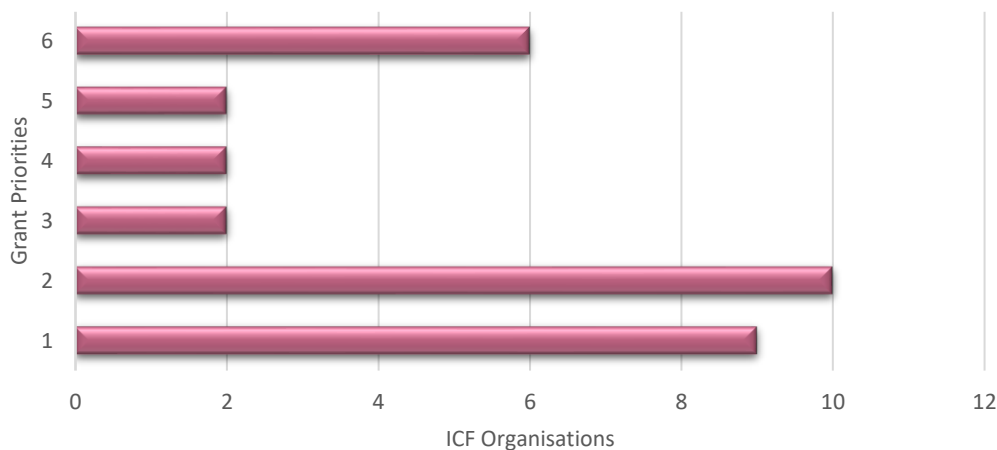
Through a partnership approach which included VASLAN representation, six funding priorities were highlighted for this round of funding. From these priorities, it is expected that a range of positive outcomes will be achieved around health and wellbeing improvement, greater resilience and independence, reduced health inequalities and more innovative models of person-centred care. A logic model has been produced which highlights the key priorities, short and medium-term outcomes indicators, and how they link into the National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes.

WHO IS BEING FUNDED?

ORGANISATION	AWARD (£)	PROJECT NAME
Clydesdale Community Activities Group (CCAG)	33,982	Making Friends
Clydesdale Community Initiatives (CCI)	128,717	Social Prescribing
Coalburn Miners Welfare Charitable Society	84,960	Community Based Social Activities
Darcy's Equine Assisted Learning Centre CIC	158,848	Stable Pathway
Forth Community Resource Centre	62,001	Getting Older People Back into the Community
The Haven	60,000	Haven Services (refresh)
Hamilton CAB	159,892	Health and Social Care Hub (refresh)
Healthy n Happy Community Development Trust	159,776	Transforming Lives (refresh)
Lanarkshire Association for Mental Health (LAMH)	76,917	Volunteer Befriending Service
Healthy and Active in East Kilbride	126,000	Living Well in East Kilbride
Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire (VASLan)	83,579	Enterprising Care
Healthy Valleys	130,512	Community Circles

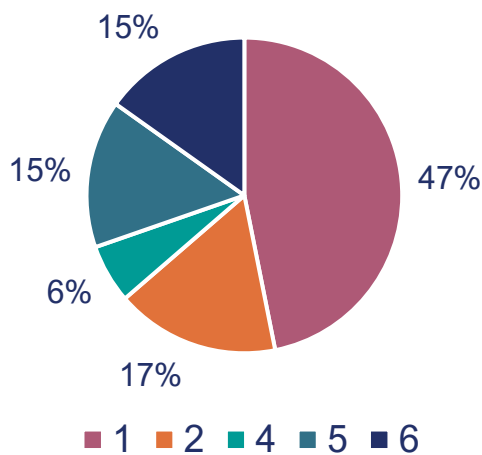
The table below illustrates the distribution of activity across each of the priorities. As the table shows, all of the funded projects will be working within at least one of the fund priorities, but the majority are working across a range of the priorities, in particular priorities 1, 2 & 6

Distribution of activities across fund priorities

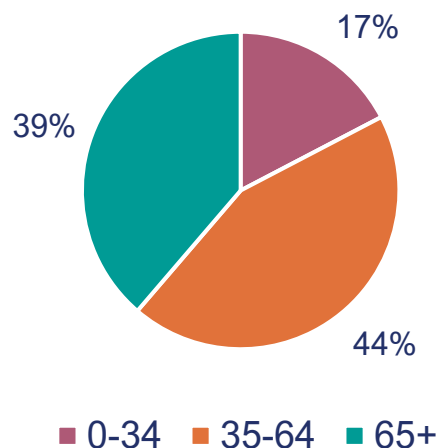


In total 6,865 people have been supported from July 2021 to June 2023 through activities aligning to the six priority areas. It is important to point out that many people are engaging with activities that fall within more than one priority area. The below pie chart below illustrates the percentage of people active within each priority. Please note that priority 3 has not been included in the illustration as this priority is concerned with third sector organisational activity and benefits to the sector, rather than to individual service users. Also highlighted is the age range of project participants.

Priority activity as % of all beneficiaries



Age range of project participants



ENGAGEMENT WITH EACH PRIORITY AND SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

Priority 1

Encourage people to safely re-engage in their community through regular social contact and outdoor activities.

Nine organisations are providing services in response to this priority. Target groups are broad but generally consist of older people who may have been shielding, people with additional support needs and people of all age groups who have reported a reduced level of mental health and wellbeing caused, or made worse, by the pandemic. Activities tend to be social in nature and focusing on group activity, encouraging interaction and increasing self confidence in social settings.

- 330 people took part in events and activities using technology such as zoom, conference calls or social networks.
- 1,254 people have been receiving group or one to one befriending support.
- 1,924 people have been receiving peer group support or have been attending a support group.
- 360 have been taking part in volunteering.
- 1,757 people have taken part in a safely planned group activity such as a walking group or a face-to-face social event.
- 3,112 people attended a safely planned community event such as a fayre or an information day.

Approximately 4,715 people are taking part in one or more of priority 1 activities.

Short-Term Outcomes Reported

- 1,911 people report feeling less lonely and isolated.
- 4,861 people report that they have made new friends.
- 431 people report that they are more in tune with online technology.

As part of its *Community Based Social Activities* project, Coalburn Miners Welfare Charitable Society introduced a “Warm Wednesday” to provide people with access to a warm place, hot drinks, snacks, computers and Wi-Fi for their own devices. A tutor was also provided on the day to help participants with any computer questions or problems, proving to be a well-used resource by all who attended. In addition, support services were invited to attend to allow participants to be signposted and make use of the Citizens Advice Bureau outreach if required. The charity’s project also includes creative art activities and chair yoga classes.

- 272 people who participated in the Community Based Social Activities project felt reduced feelings of loneliness and isolation.
- 100% of participants reported that they had made new friends as a result of engaging with the project.



“

It's been good to have the chance to be with other men. We can talk about what we want to and it's nice to get out and meet new people.

I'm so glad Healthy Valleys have been able to come here and do things, it's just lovely to see people happy and joining in.

It's too easy to just see family and get stuck at home, the walls start to close in after a while! It's been good to have somewhere to go that I felt welcome. It's given me something to look forward to and something to talk about afterwards.

It's so hard to get out to things, but having something here means I can be doing something and seeing people without having to worry about getting there and home safely.

Community Circles project participants

”



- 478 people who attended Healthy Valleys' Community Circles events said that they had enjoyed the sessions they had attended.
- 270 people said that they felt more connected as a result of attending.
- 256 people said that they felt better connected to their community.
- 276 people said that they felt their wellbeing had improved.

81 activity cafés have been delivered as part of Forth Community Resource Centre's *Getting Older People Back into the Community* project, with 123 older people attending (26 males and 97 females).

90 attendees were over 65 years of age, 51 lived alone and 14 were unpaid carers.

Activity cafés have included 18 for IT skills, 22 craft classes, 29 classes for exercise or dance, and 12 classes focusing on relaxation and socialising.

63 people attend regularly (weekly or fortnightly) and 43 people attend more than one activity.

Between January and May 2023, a new "warm space" was provided to offer anyone coming into the centre with tea, toast and soup, as well as a warm venue to relax. Many older beneficiaries participated, arriving earlier for the activity cafes to enjoy the accompanying social interaction.



“

T is 76, has worked all his life and is self-employed. He was finding it hard to slow down, especially as he didn't have a great pension. When he started attending activity cafes for IT skills, he was in a dark place and staff were genuinely deeply concerned for his personal safety and wellbeing. Through the project, T was able to access support and it was less about developing IT skills and more about off-loading. T now attends activity cafes weekly and is volunteering with the charity, helping to set up the new "Free Range Project", bringing fresh eggs at affordable prices for older people.

Forth Community Resource Centre

”



“

I carried out a site visit in August 2022 to Clydesdale Community Activities Group's (CCAG) "Making Friends" project and helped out with the lunches. The group was attended by around 25 people, mostly women. Everyone arrived by bus having been collected at home. They got a three-course lunch that had been prepared on site and a few games of bingo, with prizes for the winners. It was clear that winning was important and if they were getting close, they would get excited about it. I asked a few participants what the group meant to them, and they made it clear it was one of the few excuses they had to leave the house.

CCAG site visit observations

”

Since its inception, Healthy and Active in East Kilbride has strived to make *The Meeting Place* a safe and comfortable environment where older and disabled people can meet, socialise and make new friends. Staff and volunteers offer support, but the integral function of *The Meeting Place* is the outcome of friendship, companionship and peer support.

The charity's *Living Well in East Kilbride (LWIEK)* project aims to deliver a range of supports and services for people over the age of 50 within *The Meeting Place*, as well delivering support for people to remain well at home and come back into communities to socialise and meet their peer group.

Activities delivered through LWIEK have included a bus trip to the Museum of Rural Life in East Kilbride, with the charity's accessible minibus enabling people to participate who would otherwise find it difficult to access public transport, don't have access to a car, or find the cost of taxis prohibitive.

Feedback from the event was positive, with people enjoying getting out, especially in an outdoor setting, meeting new friends and enjoying the company. An afternoon tea in The Meeting Place to commemorate the Coronation of King Charles highlighted the importance of company and having the opportunity to come together, which people couldn't do during the pandemic.

Participants engaging with these events are encouraged to return and use the services of LWIEK, taking time to find out about interests and pastimes and then connecting people with the right service. Surveys with participants highlight the positive contribution LWIEK is making to people, including reducing social isolation and loneliness and supporting mental health and overall wellbeing.

- 461 people reported that they had made new friends as a result of engaging with the Living Well in East Kilbride project.
- 85 people feel more confident in the use of technology for social interaction.



“

I come to the meeting place at least three times a week to meet my friends. They understand me and what I have going on. One of my friends has similar health problems and it's great to be able to speak to her. I also know that there will be someone to sit and have a chat with. I don't know what I would do without it!

Living Well in East Kilbride project participant

”

Priority 2

Reduce social isolation, support people to build their confidence and resilience to remain active and independent.

Ten organisations are providing activities in support of this priority. This priority is very similar to priority 1 in that it focuses on social activities, but this priority aims at helping people who have fewer support networks or have long-term conditions, and present specific barriers to their independence.

- 519 people took part in events or activities using zoom, conference calls or social networks.
- 1,229 people have received group or one to one befriending support.
- 1,303 people have received peer group support or have been attending a support group.

Approximately 1,690 people are taking part in one or more of priority 2 activities.

Short-Term Outcomes Reported

- 1,708 people have been able to identify their own needs and aspirations.
- 681 people feel more confident in accessing support and feel there is no stigma.
- 138 people stated that they felt more connected to the community.



I visited Coalburn Miners Welfare Charitable Society and observed the armchair yoga class. Attendance at the class varies but has a few regular attenders, with some virtual attendees from people who are still isolating. I spoke to one attendee who told me she had breast cancer and had a mastectomy with removal of some lymph glands and as a result, she gets swelling in her arm. The gentle movement in the yoga helps to ease the discomfort from this. While the lady was fairly elderly and walked with a stick, she managed to do all of the standing exercises using her stick as a support and said that the yoga helps her to maintain her mobility.

Coalburn Miners Welfare Charitable Society site visit observations



I just wanted to let you know how much of a difference Darcy's is making in L's life. She is normally a very quiet and withdrawn girl who has disengaged from schooling, but when I collect her from Darcy's she is animated, happy and chats away non-stop about what she has done that morning. Since she has started coming to Darcy's, I have seen a slow but steady progress in her confidence, and she has been managing to go into school for either the Thursday afternoon or the Friday afternoon. She's not managed both yet, but I firmly believe that will come as she gains her confidence through Darcy's. I cannot thank you enough for the help you are giving my girl and in turn my family. Thank you!

Parent of Darcy's Equine Assisted Learning Centre CIC participant



M is 78 and has severe heart problems which restrict her mobility. She lives with her husband along the road from the centre. With recent restrictions and deteriorating health, she realised she would need to learn how to shop and bank online. Living so near, she was able to attend our internet and 1:1 IT support sessions. We helped her learn how to shop and bank online and addressed her concerns about online security. M is now confident and has switched her day-to-day business online. She still attends the classes when her health allows and enjoys meeting others and learning new skills.

Forth Community Resource Centre

Since the beginning of its ICF funded project, The Haven has supported 308 clients who are affected by life limiting illness and caring responsibilities. The Haven nurses help create a responsive and supportive services that assist vulnerable clients to improve their emotional, physical, mental health and wellbeing, reducing anxiety and increasing self-management and coping.

A range of supports are provided via the project, including wellbeing toolkits and an activities programme. New resources are regularly identified and added, including the opportunity for clients to have a break, bearing in mind that life limiting illness and caring responsibilities make it difficult to get away or have traditional breaks.

58 people have been connected to community supports through enhanced signposting and personal introduction by The Haven.

“

It helps talking to you, someone outside the family. It reassures me that I have that time; it's like a safety net where I can take my thoughts and feelings.

You've given me the tools and strength to know that its ok to not be ok, and to let people know that this is the case too if I'm having a period where I'm struggling more than usual.

I feel like all the other agencies have abandoned me, but The Haven is still here helping me when I need it.

Thanks for taking the time on our calls to listen and help me get through what has without doubt the most difficult thing I've ever had to go through (and am still going through).

Comments from The Haven clients

”

Clydesdale Community Initiatives' (CCI) *New Shoots* project invites participants and members of the public to come together and help improve wellbeing through connection to nature. The project has a therapeutic focus for people who want to begin new routines and try out new activities, with the aim of building confidence and improving social connections.

Many of the project participants live with long-term health conditions, particularly mental health or learning disabilities, and many are over 65. After a diagnosis of a long-term health condition or after having lived with it for years, it can often lead people to accept others making decisions for them based on their medical symptoms. Through the project's 1-1 support programme, CCI are able to talk to individuals about their goals and aspirations and work towards them looking at what steps need to be taken to move closer to that goal, helping to make those achievable for the participant. Focus groups have helped to bring those goals back into focus, with a new increased drive to help individuals meet them.

Participants report that they feel welcomed and part of a team, or even family, being involved with CCI. They feel supported and become more comfortable with any health issues they may be experiencing, with improved confidence about the road to recovery.

- 114 people received peer group support or attended a support group through the New Shoots project.
- 90 people who require support through frailty or long-term conditions were able to identify their own needs and aspirations.



Healthy and Active in East Kilbride's *Living Well in East Kilbride* project continues to support people who feel unable to attend group activities. The charity recognises that for many people, there are still concerns about COVID, ongoing vulnerabilities and a breakdown of physical and mental health due to long periods spent in social isolation. The charity understands that these factors are exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis and is working in partnership with others to determine solutions such as warm spaces, benefits advice, healthy cooking on a budget advice and health and wellbeing services.

The charity reports that supporting people who wish to remain at home presents challenges, but it carries out regular checks through its "keep in touch" calls and other services such as shopping and prescription collections. Those who are physically able to leave their home are actively encouraged to do, and encouraged to take part in the other activities that the charity offers. In a survey, 42% of respondents stated they had no support at home with 27% stating they could not leave their home. 22% stated that they could, but that it was difficult. Services that have been of particular benefit to participants at home have been the shopping and prescription collection, as well as regular telephone calls.



“

These services are a lifeline to me. I don't have any family who can help, and my friends can't help me with physical tasks. I don't know what I would do without your help.

I am quite isolated and look forward to your volunteers delivering books. I really enjoy having a chat and they always make time for me.

Living Well in East Kilbride project participants

”

Priority 3

Build the capability and quality of social enterprise in supporting health and social care.

Two organisations are providing evidence in support of this priority, which is aimed at the third sector as well as the experience of service users.

The range of outdoor activity taking place at Clydesdale Community Initiatives (CCI) and its partner sites has increased throughout the duration of the *New Shoots* project as new sites are actively developed and existing sites required more attention. The charity also continues to support and develop 6 hospital gardens, with inpatients and outpatients working alongside CCI staff and volunteers to clear overgrown vegetation, prune fruit trees, build composting sites, install signage and resume food growing.



Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire's (VASLan) *Enterprising Care* project has focused on developing and supporting the third sector, particularly in encouraging a more enterprising approach in the provision of health and social care support. 55 social enterprises have been engaged via capacity building support in order to enhance the capacity and quality of the sector in relation to health and social care services.

A significant area of work in encouraging greater collaboration between the sector and the development of new services has been the launch the South Lanarkshire Social Enterprise Network (SLSEN). After a consultation period in partnership with South Lanarkshire Council, the SLSEN was launched during November 2022. The SLSEN has convened on 3 occasions, with a combined attendance of 51 across the events. Through supporting, promoting and developing social enterprise, it aims to create the optimum environment in South Lanarkshire for social enterprise to flourish. The network continues to grow, with 38 individual organisation members currently engaging.

Priority 4

Identifying and targeting those people who are at risk of admission to hospital, providing appropriate information, support, and developing non-medical care pathways in the community.

Three organisations have provided services in response to this priority which provides tailored support to people with long-term conditions.

- 161 people have been referred via the Community Link Worker Programme.
- 465 people have benefited from a demonstrable model of non-medical care pathways.

Short-Term Outcomes Reported

- 102 people have stated they have an increased knowledge in how to manage their condition.

The Haven's "Share and Learn Sessions" are a key part of its delivery strategy. These sessions are carried out with key partners such as the Lanarkshire hospital-based Health Improvement Team and the ACCEPT Long-Term Conditions Team based at Hairmyres. These sessions are received very positively and are beneficial to The Haven's clients in, for example, planned discharge carers support.

Self-management is central to The Haven's support for clients. Resources provided from toolkits and support offered by The Haven practitioners helps clients to be better able to self-manage the challenges facing them, such as anxiety, stress or difficulty in expressing and understanding emotions.

Through the focus on early intervention and prevention, clients learn ways to become more resilient and become more able to avoid crisis situations that may normally result in an admission to hospital or the need for statutory services. Some clients report wider benefits from self-management in promoting good wellbeing and resilience, such as reduced use of alcohol or other substances.

“

We continue to receive a large number of referrals from our Community Link Worker for CamGlen. This is working well to facilitate greater connection between Health and Social Care services and opportunities that patients can access in the community.

We continue to facilitate new referrals and self-referrals from those who are struggling with their mental health, isolation and/or loneliness. Many of these referrals are now participating in face-to-face activities to help them reconnect with others. We've observed a much quicker improvement in mood and motivation when a person comes out to the groups in addition to regular 1:1 support.

Healthy n Happy Community Development Trust

”

Priority 5

Develop wider collaborative local support for people in poverty or those whose health is impacted by unemployment and financial uncertainty.

Two organisations are providing services in support of this priority, which is targeted at supporting people on a low income.

- 1,525 people have received specialised advice, representation, or advocacy.

Outcomes Reported

The support around this priority is ongoing and long-term. There is clear evidence of reduced stress and anxiety because of the service and the project is helping some of the most social and economically vulnerable people in South Lanarkshire. It should also be noted that Hamilton Citizens Advice Bureau has generated nearly £579,000 of increased income for people accessing the service.

“

We have provided advice, intensive casework support, practical assistance and representation at social security tribunal hearings for people with mental and/or physical ill-health and people living with long-term health conditions. We have provided this service via telephone, online platforms, messaging, face-to-face appointments and, where necessary, home visits.

*73% of advice provided related to social security benefits – from identifying benefit entitlement and exploring options to meet individual circumstances, through to appealing at Upper Tier Tribunal. The other main areas of advice were financial & charitable support (8%, 37% of which related to food bank aid), housing (5%) and utilities (6%). The financial gain achieved in the April to June 2023 period was **£124,309**.*

Hamilton Citizens Advice Bureau

”



“

Bike Day was a success story, with a wonderful donation from the community allowing a happy owner to get to and from work. The bike was serviced by the bike crew and passed on to its new owner. “Thank you so much, I am new to the area and needed help in getting to my job.” the new owner stated. With the cost of fuel and transport, he was delighted with having something that would save him money.

Coalburn Miners Welfare Charitable Society

”

Priority 6

Help to improve mental health and wellbeing by delivering initiatives that reduce mental health stigma and/or supports people in their community.

Six organisations are providing services within this priority which is designed around helping people to improve or maintain their mental health. Their services are targeted towards people with poor mental health, people with addictions, people affected by homelessness and people who are at risk of becoming distressed.

- 916 people have benefitted from social prescribing projects that support mental health.
- 33 people have benefitted from other non-medical pathways to support mental health and wellbeing.
- 66 people have taken part in a campaign to end stigma around mental health.
- 71 volunteers have been trained on mental health awareness.

These figures represent approximately 1,525 people who have received specific support for their mental health.

Short-Term Outcomes Reported

- 2,180 people felt supported to achieve things that were important for their mental health (includes people receiving support within other priority themes).
- 71 staff & volunteers felt more knowledgeable about mental health issues.

“

Thank you for helping me mentally and giving me the strength to pursue all those treatments. I was very low and couldn't figure out how to fix it all.

It allowed me to switch off completely. I was in a wee zone, no pressures or expectations on me. It helped my mental health.

Feedback from The Haven toolkit users

”

“

We received a referral of a gentleman “A” who was feeling lonely and isolated. Had previously been a keen runner and enjoyed being outdoors. Since being matched by a befriender his outlook has brightened and he says he looks forward to meeting up as it gets him out of the house. He also has a “smashing time having a wee blether” and this brings him “a lot of happiness”. He has now started to use other community resources and is making connections.

“M” was referred to the project. She was isolated and had a limited social circle. Following a successful match, she was helped to source and attend various local community activities and events, soon becoming comfortable attending on her own. M said “it’s great meeting up with my befriender and meeting new people”.

Lanarkshire Association for Mental Health (LAMH)

”

“

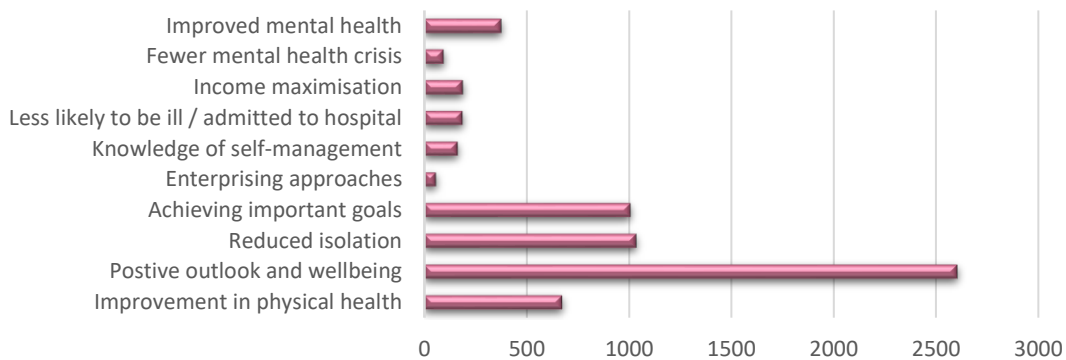
We continue to work with people who have mental health issues, long-term conditions, neurological conditions, people who are feeling lonely and isolated, and young people at risk of exclusion. Some people have been self-harming, and a significant number were self-medicating on alcohol and drugs. The focus is on what they can do, not on what they can’t, and people continue to report increased confidence to join in and try new things. The impacts are improvements in their health and wellbeing and better life choices, with a little encouragement. All of them say they feel supported to achieve things important for their mental health, whether it be taking part in our activities, attending support groups or learning techniques such as mindfulness. Some of them find value in volunteering, taking part in our social enterprise ventures or our food growing projects. We continue to place mental health at the centre of our core vision.

Clydesdale Community Initiatives (CCI)

”

MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES AND EVIDENCE

Medium-Term Outcomes

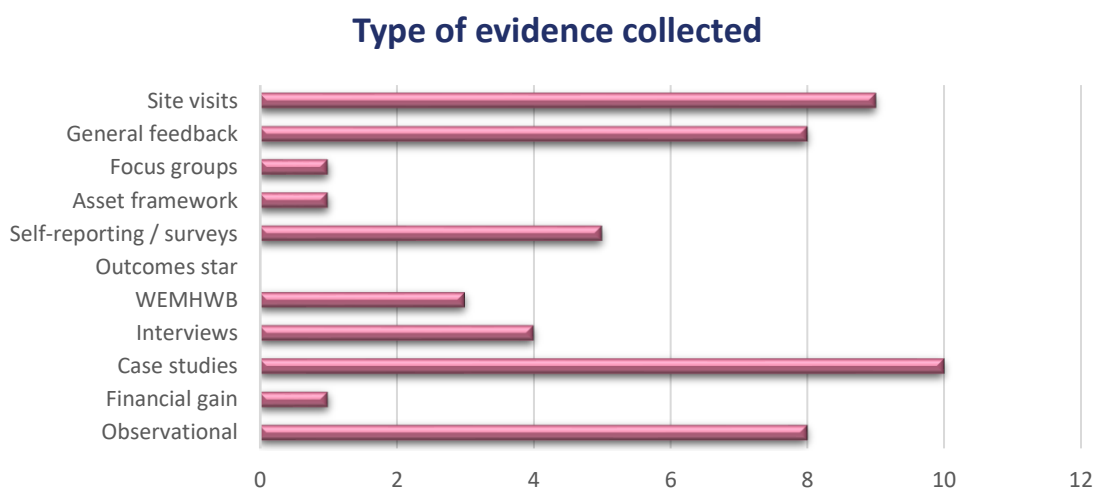


Medium-term outcomes have been reported across several of the indicator sets, the largest being that people are reporting or being observed to have a more positive outlook on life and an improved sense of wellbeing. This was reported by 9 of the organisations and totalled 2,606 people. The largest of these figures to date is 960 reported by Healthy and Active in East Kilbride and relates to a significant level of service users who remain somewhat self-isolated and whose mobility is poor. The charity provides a range of supports around telephone befriending, shopping and prescription deliveries, as well as regular wellbeing checks. Other organisations reporting significant levels are Healthy n Happy Community Development Trust (752), Healthy Valleys (276) and Coalburn Miners Welfare Charitable Society (272).

Reduced levels of isolation and anxiety are reported by 8 organisations and totals 1,035 people. Significant levels of reduced isolation and anxiety are reported by Healthy and Active in East Kilbride at 275 people and Coalburn Miners Welfare (272).

The person-centred approach is reflected by 3 organisations and relates to 1,007 people who state they have been enabled to achieve things that are important to them, while it has been assessed that interactions with 187 people has reduced the likelihood of admittance to hospital. Healthy and Active in East Kilbride also reports improvements in physical health for 369 people as a result of its health walks and exercise activities, while Coalburn Miners Welfare Charitable Society reports similar for 272 people.

Most of the funded organisations produce case studies to illustrate their evidence, while others report their observations or general feedback from interviews, focus groups and conversations. Quantitative evidence is generally included as part of an overall outcomes framework approach. VASLan has undertaken site visits to 9 organisations, interviewing participants and observing the activities.



When people register for our project, we collect baseline information such as their circumstances and experiences. We also use the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Health and Wellbeing scale to get the “feeling good, functioning well” factor. We monitor them on a three-monthly basis to get an updated WEMHWP score and collect any anecdotal evidence of whether their circumstances have changed and how they feel about the project. We also do regular polls to collect suggestions on how to improve the project.

Forth Community Resource Centre

Our outcomes focus on helping people to re-engage with the community, improving their confidence, mental health, wellbeing, and encouraging them to be more active. We collect information at the outset when they join focusing on their feelings and any support they may need. A lot of our evidence is through what we observe in our interactions with people, and we try to capture this with photographs as well as talking to them to get feedback about improvements in their lives as a result of participating.

Coalburn Miners Welfare Charitable Society



CASE STUDIES

Hamilton Citizens Advice Bureau

BACKGROUND

J is 66 years-old. J had been contacted by letter by DWP to inform him that he had an overpayment of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and that he would need to repay £24,000. The DWP claimed J had not informed them, at the time of his application for the benefit or subsequently, that his wife is in employment. J maintains that he has always reported his wife's employment whenever he has completed ESA forms. ESA entitlement was reduced as the DWP had now taken into account J's wife's income.

A Mandatory Reconsideration Request had already been submitted but was refused and the matter was at the appeal stage. J requested representation from Health and Welfare Advice (HWA). The DWP have advised J that he should check if he is entitled to Pension Credit to help offset the debt.

The DWP were notified that HWA were representing J at appeal and a Form of Authority was submitted through the Courts and Tribunal Service. The DWP was then asked to note that HWA was helping J to appeal against the overpayment decision on the grounds of official error as J reported that he and his wife have never tried to hide their income.

J had received two mandatory reconsideration letters dated 18th January 2023. The text was slightly different on the two letters. One gives details of his wife's income and one of his ESA payments. The letters both recalculate J's entitlement to income-related ESA based on his wife's income and show some entitlement over the period for which it was claimed. However, the DWP have calculated that J needs to repay a large sum of money.

The letter also stated that the DWP has listened to recordings of phone calls between the DWP and J and checked forms he filled in and they can find no evidence of him declaring his wife's wages. They have found evidence, they report, of J advising them that he and his wife had no other income except his pensions.

INTERVENTION

Hamilton CAB obtained copies of the transcripts of the calls and the forms J completed for his ESA claim via a Right of Access Request on www.gov.uk. They did this because the DWP decided that they would not comply with J's request via Hamilton CAB for a copy of all forms to be sent to him. There were errors in the transcript, e.g. J reports that he has never worked for Fiinu Ltd., as the DWP asserted in one of the DWP MR decision letters. This information was then added to the appeal submissions.

Hamilton CAB then received copies of the recording of J's conversation with the DWP when he applied for ESA. This appeared to be the original application. Upon listening to the recording, J noted that he was asked if his wife worked more than 20 hours per week, to which he replied 'no' as she worked 16 hours. J was then asked if he and his wife had any other sources of income beyond what he had already declared (which included his pensions). He said 'no' as he assumed they already knew about his wife's wages as they had asked how many hours she worked. Amongst the papers that J received from DWP was his Work Capability Assessment, in which he referred to his wife's employment.

OUTCOME

It became clear that there had been a misunderstanding, as J had been asked if his wife worked more than 20 hours and then was asked if they had any other income other than what he had already declared. J assumed that this meant they already knew about his wife's wages. However, the wording of the question from the DWP makes the intended meaning clear, so Hamilton CAB advised that continuing with claiming "official error" was not an option.

In light of the information that Hamilton CAB received, it became clear that an appeal would be unlikely to succeed. CAB's caseworker wrote to the DWP to ask if they would recalculate the ESA as contribution-based rather than income-related, explaining how the misunderstanding arose. If a final overpayment figure is determined, then Hamilton CAB will assist J with identifying a suitable option for settling the issue.

Hamilton CAB advise that they included this case study as it demonstrates the complexities of the benefit system and barriers that individuals face when attempting to address issues, from understanding the problem to obtaining and processing evidence relating to them.

BACKGROUND

M is a vulnerable adult who lives alone after a lengthy stay in a secure hospital. He suffers from profound mental health issues and is supported by the Richmond Fellowship as well as by social work, the medical expertise of Beckford Lodge and Hairmyres Hospital.

- M was struggling with the cost-of-living crisis, particularly with increasing fuel prices. For this reason, he had fallen behind with the payment of his energy bills. M requested support regarding this issue.
- M was also wishing to move from his property. He had requested and received a housing application for East Dunbartonshire Council as well as for South Lanarkshire Council, so he could be placed on a list for a move away from his home in Bothwell.
- As the client was struggling with rising prices, he was looking to maximise his income and looking towards other charitable sources of income and support. M specifically stated that he was finding it difficult to afford new clothes.

INTERVENTION

- Financial Support: Hamilton CAB Health and Welfare Advice (HWA) successfully submitted a Financial Wellbeing Fund application and M received £250 from this in the form of two payments that could be redeemed at his local shop.
- Budgeting Loan: The client was also supported through an Employment and Support Allowance budgeting loan application and is awaiting the outcome of this.
- Assistance with Fuel Debt: M signed a form of authority and was supported through negotiations with British Gas regarding his debt. Thanks to HWA's support, M received an affordable repayment plan. M also had a British Gas Energy Trust application prepared and this will be submitted in early May to hopefully reduce some of the outstanding debt.
- Revolve Clothing Application: M was provided with a Revolve clothing voucher and was accompanied by his Social Worker to the Revolve clothing shop in Hamilton where he received some t-shirts. He did not redeem this voucher fully and intends to go back later to get more clothes.
- Housing Forms: The first form to East Dunbartonshire Council was not received by the housing team, but as it was scanned to our system, this was printed out and sent back to them. M has also received his South Lanarkshire Council Home Options and Medical Assessment form and will soon be supported through this application.

OUTCOME

M would have been isolated and would have had extreme difficulty dealing with issues that he faced this year, were it not for the home visits and support that HWA has provided. This has given the client the ability to lead a less stressed life knowing that his caseworker was dealing with these issues for him. The client is in regular contact with his caseworker and called on the day he went to Revolve to say he had gotten his clothes and to say thanks for the referral.

Forth Community Resource Centre

BACKGROUND

A is 78 years old. She has enjoyed coming to Activity Cafés for company and chat since the beginning of the project and is always one of the first to arrive. As a keen crafter, she appreciates meeting with like-minded people.

In October, her husband of 57 years died unexpectedly, leaving her adrift. Her family lives elsewhere.

INTERVENTION

After a brief period, A returned to Activity Cafés in the FCRC in late November and benefitted from the support of all the friends she had made there. She now also meets some of them outside of classes to go walking and shopping. Having a good rapport with staff allowed her to turn to the team for help to sort out her affairs – electricity, telephone, etc. Staff are also providing reassurance and spending time listening to her when she wants some quiet time to talk about her late husband.

OUTCOME

When it came to the practicalities, the team at FCRC referred A to a Citizen's Advice Bureau advice surgery. CAB answered A's questions regarding her electricity bill and assisted her with delayed pension changes. In addition, FCRC are helping her with her new mobile phone so she can keep in touch with family and friends. The staff also make sure she is looking after herself and has enough food. It is a long and difficult road for A, but she is doing okay.

Forth Community Resource Centre

BACKGROUND

J is 83 years old, lives alone and is registered blind. A devoted mother, grandmother and great grandmother, she talks a lot about her family. She sees family regularly but not every day, and some days she does not receive any visits. Her friend had been coming to Activity Cafés for a while and asked J to join her.

INTERVENTION

After attending a session and enjoying the company, J now attends Strength and Balance gentle exercises regularly with her friend who picks her up in the car. The format of the sessions suits her – she does her exercises and then gets a good blether with the other people who are there.

OUTCOME

J has been attending Activity Café sessions regularly for over a year now. She still gets a lift in from her friend but, with her increased mobility resulting from exercising at Activity Cafés and now also at home, she has recently become able to walk home alongside a couple of the other ladies/new friends who make sure she gets back safely. Always enjoying the blethers, she has told us that coming to Activity Cafés helps her feel more like a part of the village.

BACKGROUND

J is 80 years old and lives alone. She recently moved to sheltered accommodation in Forth. J has always been very active and is finding it hard to deal with the aches and conditions of old age which are restricting her movement.

INTERVENTION

J has attended Activity Cafés from the beginning. She attends exercise sessions to improve her mobility and craft sessions for her wellbeing. J is now driving less, and as these sessions are delivered locally, she does not have to travel far to take part. J loves to chat and has thoroughly enjoyed the company at "Bite and Blethers" over the winter.

OUTCOME

J now attends 2 or 3 Activity Cafés per week, especially during the winter months. In her own words, she says: "*It is a reason to go out, meet people and try new things.*" She also says she has made a lot of new friends, which helps her feel settled.

She finds that the S&B exercise sessions are particularly good for her mobility.

Forth Community Resource Centre

BACKGROUND

T is 76 years old. He has been working all his life and is self-employed. He is finding it hard to slow down, especially due to his low pension. When he started attending Activity Cafés for IT skills he was in a dark place, and staff were genuinely deeply concerned for his personal safety and wellbeing.

INTERVENTION

Whilst T attended Activity Cafés, staff took time to listen to what he had to say. Through some of FCRC's other projects, staff gave him food to tide him over and cash to help pay for the cost of his oil over the winter. His time at the sessions has been less about developing IT skills and more about off-loading. Staff are currently encouraging him to attend a Citizen's Advice Bureau surgery for a benefits-check to see if he is entitled to additional payments.

OUTCOME

T attends Activity Cafés every week. He is now volunteering with FCRC and has helped them set up their Free Range Project, bringing fresh eggs at affordable prices to the older people attending Activity Cafés. He has also talked to us about setting up a men's support group.

In his own words: *"When we are down and feel lost, having people to talk to and listen is essential and life-saving. Someone to talk to – someone to guide you. It's like walking into a friend's house."*

Coalburn Miners Welfare Charitable Society

BACKGROUND

L is a 60+ year-old lady who has recently become aware of Coalburn Miners Welfare Charitable Society's social groups through a friend who also participates. L's husband has dementia, which makes L feel very isolated.

INTERVENTION

Once told about the social groups, L now attends at every opportunity, frequenting the lunch clubs, the Bingo, Arts & Crafts, and the film club. Coalburn Miners welcomed L into the group and made her feel comfortable. After the team told L about the other social groups, L embraced the opportunity to get out and make new friends.

OUTCOME

L is now a very outgoing person. The groups have given her a new lease of life, and she attends at every given opportunity. L has met new people and reports that she now has a more positive outlook on life.

Coalburn Miners Welfare Charitable Society

BACKGROUND

M lives in a nearby retirement village. She is the official carer for her husband who has Parkinson's disease. She also suffers from depression, which has worsened since her husband became unwell.

M was looking for a place to meet other people and share her concerns, where she would be stimulated intellectually as well as emotionally.

INTERVENTION

A member of the team suggested attending the Friday class. This was based on the fact that M was looking for:

- A way to reduce stress and anxiety through meditation and somatic therapy (simple exercises),
- A space where she could voice her concerns,
- A place to talk to like-minded people who are respectful.

OUTCOME

M reports that her overall mental well-being has improved considerably since attending the classes. She says that her fellow attendees respect her and are not ageist or patronising, she feels like they treat her like a person. M really enjoys the light exercises and believes that her physical health has improved since taking part in these classes.

Coalburn Miners Welfare Charitable Society

BACKGROUND

C has been attending a Yoga class at Coalburn Miners Welfare Charitable Society to improve her wellbeing, as well as overall strength and flexibility. She is an elderly lady who would like to explore how to further improve her health, her symptoms, and her mental health. C loved the Thursday class and wanted to try the Friday class. She likes the instructor's approach, which makes her feel relaxed about attending the classes.

INTERVENTION

This project addresses C's symptoms and concerns on a more one-to-one level. C feels relaxed and confident enough to share her issues and concerns in more detail in a safe and warm environment that suits her needs. The classes are split into two sections, which suits C's body and mental health simultaneously.

OUTCOME

C reports that the Friday classes have helped her to relax over the week a lot more. She feels like she can express herself in a respectful environment. She also benefits tremendously from the Vagus nerve somatic movement exercises.

Coalburn Miners Welfare Charitable Society

BACKGROUND

R is in her late forties and has recently lost her husband. She already attends the lunch clubs at Coalburn Miners, where the team told her about their Tea Dance and film club, both of which she is now attending.

INTERVENTION

The team offered R their support, advising that she could call them if she needed a shoulder to cry on, or even just for company.

OUTCOME

As a result, R is now socialising more within the community and is feeling less isolated.

Coalburn Miners Welfare Charitable Society

BACKGROUND

P heard about Coalburn Miners' computer classes through word of mouth. She joined as a complete beginner to computing.

INTERVENTION

Coalburn Miners' tutor made P feel welcome and started teaching her the basics. She soon felt confident with all basic aspects of Microsoft Office. The team also provided details of all the activities offered by the charity.

OUTCOME

P reports that she is now using technology regularly and that she now feels more confident in general. She feels less lonely and isolated now that she is attending the lessons, and she reports that her mental health has improved.

Coalburn Miners Welfare Charitable Society

BACKGROUND

After losing her husband, A was very lonely. At the age of 71, she felt lost and needed to make some new friends. A found Coalburn Miners' Knit & Knatter group and decided to join.

INTERVENTION

The Knit & Knatter group welcomed A with open arms. According to A, the group provides her with a lot of support. Talking to the group about her circumstances has lifted a weight from her shoulders. She enjoys attending and listening to others telling their stories.

OUTCOME

A's life is now brighter. The loss of her husband put her into a depression which has now lifted.

Coalburn Miners Welfare Charitable Society

BACKGROUND

K is one of the oldest clients attending Coalburn Miners' chair yoga class. She likes to be involved with the organisation's activities in general, as they benefit her socially and mentally. K wanted to give chair yoga a try as she felt it was a physical activity she could manage and improve on.

INTERVENTION

The sessions are very successful for K. Now she knows what the sessions entail, she relaxes into the class more and helps others to feel safe and relaxed as well. K is confident, can fully engage with the poses, and fully enjoys the whole experience.

OUTCOME

K's posture, especially around her neck and shoulders, has improved tremendously over the past few months. The instructor has also noticed that K is "switching off" less and has shown major development in identifying and understanding the reasons behind the practice for her, both physically and mentally. She is happier now when she comes to the classes.

Coalburn Miners Welfare Charitable Society

BACKGROUND

B heard about Coalburn Miners' Yoga Beginners classes through word of mouth. She is a quiet participant, but she started to open up after a few weeks and explained what has led her to yoga. B likes to have this hour to herself where she can get a break from her daily routines and family. She enjoys dedicating this time to herself and her body.

INTERVENTION

B enjoys the yoga sessions. She is attending consistently, which is improving her practice. The instructor reassured B that she would be accepted in the beginners class without judgement.

OUTCOME

B started the class as a complete beginner. She has now shown how much she can improve her flexibility, alignment and posture within only a few weeks. She says: *"I have gained confidence in this class, and I don't feel self-conscious anymore. Our instructor has helped me overcome this fear, and now I can improve more."*

Coalburn Miners Welfare Charitable Society

BACKGROUND

M enjoys Arts & Crafts, and she has been attending Knit & Knatter right from the start, as well as the evening Art classes. M has many skills, and it would be great for her to share her knowledge with other interested people. Unfortunately, M's husband fell ill, and this stopped her from coming for a while. M lost her confidence and had to be encouraged to return. She felt like she should spend all her time at home looking after her husband, and even when he moved into a care home, she felt guilty for being able to do other things.

INTERVENTION

The team encouraged M to return to Arts & Crafts and to socialise with like-minded people. The team provided an opportunity to lead on an activity to give her purpose and to grow her confidence. They helped her understand that it would make both hers and her husband's life better if she was enjoying her spare time.

OUTCOME

M held a Halloween pumpkin carving and chocolate making course with her daughter, which was received with great fun. M felt that this provided her with the opportunity to spend time with her daughter, to do something a little different, to learn new skills, to have fun in a relaxed atmosphere and to feel part of the group. M felt she had achieved something great and felt really good about herself. She is keen to deliver something similar around Easter time. M has now returned to fully enjoying the classes. She is also enjoying socialising with others and building her confidence.

Darcy's Equine Assisted Learning Centre CIC

BACKGROUND

Prior to his referral to Darcy's, E was expressing suicidal thoughts, was behaving in a physically aggressive ways both at home and in school, and was difficult to engage in conversation about how he was feeling and strategies which may help him. Although he has been referred to CAMHS, he has not been seen by them and is on a waiting list.

INTERVENTION

E learned about the horses and how they interact with each other in different situations. Discussions were based on what one horse may be feeling and then the reaction it has to other horses. E was keen to engage in physical work around the Centre and the team gave him the opportunity to this.

OUTCOME

E has really enjoyed his time at Darcy's to the extent that his time was increased by another hour for each of the sessions. E speaks positively about his experience and has shared stories about his time there with enthusiasm. This has allowed adults in school to engage E in conversations, thus making it easier to build positive relationships with him. The team are not aware of any suicidal thoughts being present for E since starting at Darcy's. Whilst he still struggles to cope with strong, negative emotions, he is more open and willing to talk about these feelings with adults in school and at home. E is a boy who has clearly benefited from his time at Darcy's.

Darcy's Equine Assisted Learning Centre CIC

BACKGROUND

J was going through a period of no outside contact or stimulation, constantly staying in her bedroom becoming more depressed and falling into a dark place. J was referred to Darcy's via CAMHS.

INTERVENTION

J completed her National 4 Animal Handling and Animal Husbandry units. She learned about horse behaviour and how to keep herself safe when with them. She found great comfort in being around the horses and gained a lot of knowledge on how best to care for them.

OUTCOME

From day one at Darcy's, the team could see a light starting to appear in J's eyes. Each week her main outlook was focused on visiting the centre. Slowly her confidence grew. Physically being outdoors in the fresh air contributed to not only her mental but also physical health. The whole family witnessed a positive change in J as a result of the fantastic work, care, and understanding J has received from the team. J's family expressed that they greatly appreciate all the work, time and effort that is put in at Darcy's and hope others will benefit from this service. The knowledge J gained from her time at Darcy's has led her to seeking a job in animal husbandry / care. J went on to a volunteer position looking after animals at a local children's nursery.

Darcy's Equine Assisted Learning Centre CIC

BACKGROUND

Prior to her referral to Darcy's, G was struggling to attend school and was reluctant to accept and receive supports being offered by the school. G was referred to CAMHS due to the level of her anxiety due to her Autism Spectrum Disorder.

INTERVENTION

G completed her SQA Caring for Animals qualification. She was given the opportunity to engage in activities that she enjoyed most in a relaxed, judgement-free atmosphere.

OUTCOME

Whilst G continues to need a part-time school timetable, she attends school regularly and has recently had the confidence to add some new subjects to her timetable. She has also been willing to work with the Occupational Therapist and the Educational Psychologist and uses some of the strategies they have recommended to her. G was also able to speak out at her review meeting and state some supports which would help her going forward. The team believe that G's experience at Darcy's has helped her to build her confidence in a way which has allowed her to sustain her school engagement and work with professionals who can help her ensure her voice is heard regarding the supports she needs to overcome her school-related anxiety.

Darcy's Equine Assisted Learning Centre CIC

BACKGROUND

A has Autism, ADHD and ODD. He finds mainstream school and traditional education extremely challenging. A loves learning about animals and nature and feels happy when he is in an environment such as this. A had been attending Forest Schools two mornings per week as an alternative timetable at Kear Campus. This was the only learning he was doing, and he engaged extremely well with his teachers and this way of learning. The team noticed that Darcy's would be beneficial for A and he would engage well with it. A was happy that he was given the opportunity to spend time with the animals at Darcy's and learn all about them. A is very misunderstood and his anxiety-driven behaviour is often put down to his diagnoses. However, A also has a lot of trauma that he has not worked through. At Darcy's, A is given the opportunity to connect with the animals and staff on an emotional level and can begin to work through his trauma and anxiety.

INTERVENTION

A has been completing a SQA Caring for Animals qualification. He is still attending the Centre and spends his time looking after and handling the animals on site. He works 1:1 with a facilitator and is very engaged in all activities.

OUTCOME

A has been much calmer and has enjoyed slotting Darcy's into his routine. It has given him more purpose throughout the week and improved his mood. A is looking forward to learning more at Darcy's and possibly getting a qualification there, as this is something he is worried about as he does not attend mainstream school. This will be a huge achievement for A which will fill him with a lot of pride.

Healthy n Happy Community Development Trust

BACKGROUND

A was referred to Healthy n Happy by Eastvale. She was keen to get involved with activities. She suffers from a series of illnesses which affect her day-to-day life, including fibromyalgia. She also helps to care for her father, who has dementia, and her daughter, who suffers from anxiety. This has left A with little time for herself, which has in turn left her feeling stressed and isolated.

INTERVENTION

The Transforming Lives team provided A with a phone and spoke to her about activities they have on offer. A liked the sound of arts and crafts, as she does drawings in her own time. She also liked the sound of yoga as a form of light exercise and the coffee afternoons for a chance to have a casual chat with other people.

The Transforming Lives team talked A through the details for each activity, helped her book them and then set up reminder texts.

OUTCOME

Due to her responsibilities and health issues, A found it difficult to attend the sessions. However, after some time and support from the team, she was able to attend the coffee afternoons. She said that they were *“a great chance to get out for a while”* and she enjoyed speaking to the group. She had a great time in her first session talking to other pet owners, showing pictures of her cats and some of her drawings.

The team will continue to work with A and connect her to other activities. Caring for others and her own health issues had left A feeling stressed and isolated. Coffee afternoons were a great chance for her to speak to other people in a casual setting.

Healthy n Happy Community Development Trust

BACKGROUND

B had recently moved to Rutherglen. Due to lockdown, she had been isolated in her home. She has been suffering from anxiety and depression for many years. Due to her isolation, her mental health issues worsened. She got involved with an organisation called Reach, who then referred her to Healthy n Happy. B was interested in starting out with health walks, aiming to get to know the area and get out more.

INTERVENTION

As B was interested in walks, the Transforming Lives team let her know about the various walks happening throughout the week. She was most interested in the health walks on Fridays, so a member of the team helped her to book onto that. B also suffers from a poor memory, so the team organised reminder texts with all the details of the walks.

OUTCOME

B really enjoyed her time on the walk. She went on many of the ones taking place in Rutherglen. She said: *“walking gives me confidence to go out. It’s no longer a new area to me.”* She is now able to go on walks on her own.

B is now also getting involved in a local peer support group thanks to her increased confidence.

Healthy n Happy Community Development Trust

BACKGROUND

C was referred to Healthy n Happy by a Community Link Worker. He was experiencing low mood, low motivation, and anxiety, and had been signed off sick from work with Cardiologist input.

INTERVENTION

The Transforming Lives team called C and explored what he is experiencing. We explained about some of the groups we hold and invited him to Coffee Afternoon and Peer Support. He selected to attend the Peer Support Group.

OUTCOME

C has been attending every session of the Peer Support Group for about five weeks and reflects that it is helpful to him to speak to people who are outside of his family unit. He has enjoyed meeting others in the group and notices similarities in their experiences which he finds helpful.

The Community Link Worker sent us feedback that C is like a "new person" since coming to the group.

C now feels less alone and says he has a reason to get out of the house each week. Receiving and providing advice in the group has helped to build his confidence and sense of purpose. This may positively impact other areas of his life.

Healthy n Happy Community Development Trust

BACKGROUND

J was referred to Healthy n Happy in January 2023. He disclosed chronic anxiety and low mood. He was struggling with an Insurance Dispute and had self-harmed following a rejection of his benefits.

INTERVENTION

During the initial call, Healthy n Happy identified compliments J. had received which he had not acknowledged as legitimate. By the end of the call, J. realised they might be accurate.

After a couple of calls, J felt confident to come to the Coffee Afternoon. He attended a few occasions and has enjoyed conversations with other participants.

Staff discussed other stressors in his life and his support network. J is slowly acknowledging he can ask for help from his loved ones.

OUTCOME

J has now been more active in his daily life. He has attended a sauna to relax, has cut down trees in his garden, been playing with his grandson, started playing the guitar, and is accepting support from his CPN.

J initially thought the positive changes in his life were a direct consequence of his new medication, but he now realises that his actions and bravery have played the biggest part in his successes.

J is handling difficult situations proactively and has received some positive news about his insurance claim.

BACKGROUND

D was referred to HnH after having become very isolated over the course of the pandemic. She was rarely leaving the house or socialising. When the support worker first met her, she talked about having withdrawn into herself and expressed that she struggled to gather motivation to go out and socialise or do activities.

D felt that her ability to concentrate had diminished. She used to love reading, but more recently struggled to maintain the attention span to finish books. She used the phrase “brain fog” to discuss her difficulty to concentrate.

INTERVENTION

A member of the Transforming Lives team met with D in Number 18, HnH's building, to find out more about her situation and to let her know about the various different activities they had available. The conversation lasted about an hour. The support worker also told her about HnH's coffee afternoon and invited her along to this.

OUTCOME

Feedback from D:

"I was really surprised, I found myself in a different head space and there was a difference for a few days afterwards. My head cleared up a bit."

"I downloaded a book on my Kindle on Sunday evening and finished it by Tuesday. I haven't done that in 3 years."

"I feel as if I have been running on low power mode for the last 3 years, just doing the bare minimum, but now I feel like a blockage has been cleared."

Healthy n Happy Community Development Trust

BACKGROUND

S was referred by his psychologist with thoughts of suicide, increasing depression and a recent debilitating change to his health for which he is on a long waiting list to get surgery. S had lost his job as a result of his health, and he consequently lost his flat. S and his partner were staying with various family members, often in quite difficult circumstances. His situation made it very hard for him to find any happiness or joy in his life and his anger and distrust in supportive organisations grew.

INTERVENTION

After a few phone calls, the Transforming Lives team ascertained that S would open up more in person. S now has regular 1:1 face to face appointments where he offloads how he is feeling. With help from the team, S has identified sources of joy in his life and introduced ways to seek and observe happiness in other areas of his life.

For practical matters, the Transforming Lives team called Housing on S's behalf, but asked anonymous questions to dispel some myths about applying for housing. The team was able to advise him on how to best pursue his housing application. Additionally, the team did a benefits calculation and issued him foodbank vouchers.

OUTCOME

S reported back that the discussions about observing happiness had been helping him to be more positive. Openness and regular communication has helped him to grow his trust for supportive agencies.

In June, S's housing application was successful, and he was offered accommodation. After the benefits calculation he has been receiving a backdated PIP payment which has nearly cleared his debt, thus helping him to save for his surgery overseas which is now booked.

Healthy n Happy Community Development Trust

BACKGROUND

G was given the Healthy n Happy number by his GP. He had a physical injury that had made him unable to work. He had also been suffering from mental health issues that caused low mood and suicidal thoughts. He was interested in using our services to regain a routine and to engage in activities outside.

INTERVENTION

A member of the Transforming Lives team spoke to G. Once he disclosed to Healthy n Happy staff that he was experiencing suicidal thoughts, a member of the Transforming Lives team contacted G's GP to make them aware of this and to set up a safety plan. During this time, G was also able to attend the gardening group. The Transforming Lives team member also set up regular in-person chats to check in with G.

OUTCOME

G is now on medication to help with his low moods and is in regular contact with his GP. He is also still having regular chats with a member of the Transforming Lives team. Finally, he is still attending the weekly gardening group. He said that the gardening group is “a good laugh”: *“it’s making me think about next week. I feel like I’m getting back to my normal self again.”*

The Transforming Lives team will continue working with G to help improve his wellbeing.

Healthy n Happy Community Development Trust

BACKGROUND

L was referred by the Richmond Fellowship. She was interested in mainly exercise classes and activities on Mondays and Tuesdays. She had been struggling to go out since the start of lockdown and was interested in getting back out and exercising, both for her physical and mental health.

INTERVENTION

A member of the Transforming Lives team met with L in Number 18 and discussed what classes HnH had on. L was very interested in MorphFit, a gentle exercise class running on a Monday. The Transforming Lives team member who met with her helped her to book onto the class, sent her a reminder text and checked in with her afterwards to see how it went.

OUTCOME

L is now regularly attending the MorphFit class. She said: *"It's helped me get into a routine and the people there have been so nice."* The Transforming Lives team will keep in touch with her as she looking into attending other activities as well.

Healthy and Active in East Kilbride

BACKGROUND

B's wife passed away 7 years ago, and as he has no close immediate family, he increasingly spent more time on his own. The lack of social interaction was affecting B's mental health and cause very low mood.

B's niece, who volunteers in The Meeting Place Café (TMP), suggested coming to the café for a cup of coffee. B was apprehensive at first as he didn't know anyone, so brought his friend P with him for support.

Both B and P were quiet when they started visiting TMP, but the supervisor spent time with them and introduced them to some other attendees, who also spent time getting to know them. This quickly became B and P's new routine and they got to know all the staff, volunteers, and service users.

Sadly, P was admitted to hospital at the end of last year and died unexpectedly, which was very difficult for B and the people who knew him at The Meeting Place. B misses P, but his friends at TMP rallied round and continue to support him.

INTERVENTION

B visits TMP five days a week, spending the day chatting with other attendees and volunteers. This has greatly helped B to cope with the grief of losing P.

The Meeting Place is now an integral part of B's daily routine, where he is supported in a safe environment. B has struck up a good friendship with one of the volunteers, who knows his coffee order by heart and has it ready for B arriving. They often have long discussions over common interests throughout the day.

TMP has daffodils growing on our windowsill and B has decided to take the lead, making sure they are watered every day, which gives him a purpose and pride in taking ownership.

OUTCOME

B is slowly feeling better, he is laughing and joking with all the volunteers. He still comes in every day and often takes new service users under his wing. The team have seen a real difference in B recently, and other attendees rely on him for a good joke and a laugh.

When the team recently asked B what he thought about The Meeting Place, he said: *"I honestly don't know what I'd do if you wasn't open."*

Healthy Valleys

BACKGROUND

B came along to Craft Circle after seeing it promoted on the local Facebook page. Her sister had attended the community café previously and had encouraged her to come along to the group. She was happy to attend as it was local and she could make her own way there in her wheelchair, without being dependant on others.

B was no longer able to work, and after a major health scare she now uses an electric wheelchair. B was concerned about the ongoing financial implication of not working. She was also becoming increasingly isolated because of her own health and mobility issues, but also because of the negative impact of anxiety and worry about her daughter.

INTERVENTION

As a result of attending a social circle session, B was referred into Healthy Valleys by the Circles Project Worker to receive a one-to-one telephone support call from one of Healthy Valleys Community Health Navigators (CHN). During the call she was offered signposting to other HV services, including groups that might help B better self-manage her mental health and wellbeing through stress management and mindfulness. B discussed her financial concerns with the CHN, who advised B to contact Citizen's Advice and Money Matters. The CHN sent information leaflets to the next social circle via the Circle Project Worker.

OUTCOME

Although B felt unable to attend any of the other groups on offer at this point in time, she now has a pathway to access this support when she feels ready or able. B arranged an appointment with Citizen's Advice and was supported to apply for additional benefits. This financial support improved her anxiety around money. B was happy to continue attending the craft group, explaining that she felt a real benefit from being out of the house, socialising in a relaxed and friendly venue and having some time to herself.

Feedback:

“Living in a community like this, there really isn’t a lot for disabled people like myself to do. I go to church, I come here and I’m at home. That’s why I enjoy this group – it’s easy and accessible for me in my wheelchair, it’s an easy hour away from the house... I can knit or craft at home, and my sister could get a bowl of soup at home – but it’s about being out of the house, not sitting at home on your own during the day, enjoying different chat and getting out of your own head.”

BACKGROUND

J was referred to Healthy Valleys post-pandemic for support with regaining confidence and difficulty due to social isolation. During a 1:1 goal identifying session, J told her PW that she had found lockdown particularly difficult. Her son has an Autism Spectrum Disorder and frequently displays challenging behaviours. *“I felt I’d lost myself, lost confidence. I used to do Amateur Dramatics and be right out there, but after lockdown even leaving the house was hard work.”* During the conversation, J disclosed that she had previously enjoyed creative activities. The PW suggested that she might like to attend a creative social circle being held at Thornton Rd. Community Centre.

INTERVENTION

As J began to attend the Social Circle, the PW noted that it took several sessions before J looked outwardly comfortable and felt able to contribute to the conversations. The PW offered J additional support. Noting that J was very able, the PW suggested that she could help a participant who had less fine motor capacity. J supported the beneficiary during the activity for 2 sessions, then she approached the PW and said that if there was anything else she could do to help she would be happy to.

J began to support the PW to facilitate the group, helping set up activities and supporting other attendees, which increased her confidence. At this point, the PW suggested that J should complete volunteer training to support the delivery of the sessions longer term. J completed HV volunteer induction training and continued to support the group. The PW asked J if she would take over sole responsibility for the sessions. At first J was hesitant, so it was agreed that there would be a gradual handover and that the PW would be there to support her if she felt she needed it.

OUTCOME

At first J began running the groups on a fortnightly basis, then she took over running the group every week. The PW said: *“It’s night and day from when J was referred in, you wouldn’t recognise her as being the same person! She always had the ability, she just needed to be somewhere that reminded her of the things she was capable of and encouraged her to do them. There was a lovely moment at the Christmas Carol event where J sang a solo. Afterwards she told me that she hadn’t sung for years, she was so happy you could see it shining out of her.”*

Thornton Road Community Centre Group valued the social circle and the social outcomes for those who attended and J’s contribution so much that they secured funding for its continuation. J was approached by the committee and offered a small sessional payment to continue to plan and deliver the group. J told the PW: *“It’s made a huge difference to me and to my family. I feel like my old self, I love being at the groups and working with other people, and the bit of money has made life so much better. With my partner being at Uni and me not really being able to work around the wee man every bit helps, but it’s as much about the feeling that I am able to contribute something as the cash.”*

BACKGROUND

This client was registered with The Haven on 04/05/2023 (the client following a recommendation from a friend), and a toolkit was initially sent out. Through Nurse sessions, the client was recommended for Wellbeing Sessions. This client is attending The Haven for bereavement support, and she is also supporting a very close friend through a traumatic bereavement, and although the client has close family, she doesn't feel very supported herself. This client has many health issues, mainly surrounding her eyes and is on steroids - which has caused her to gain weight, and the resulting weight gain is now affecting her mental health. She feels very isolated, is depressed, feels very angry all the time, suffers from constant headaches (which she is getting investigated by her GP) and lacks motivation. She feels she used to be very social, but now prefers her own company. The client attends a Ladies Group, however her weight issues are deterring her from attending the swimming block that they have organised just now.

INTERVENTION

The therapist took the WIN approach and found that outwith the client's goal of trying to lose weight, the client wanted to stop feeling angry all the time. The client had been extremely thankful for receiving the Haven Toolkit, and did enjoy the colouring books, however she admitted she struggled with her sight, so the therapist organised some large print colouring books to be sent. The client felt that the stress ball was helping her with her wrist pain. The therapist guided the client through a Visualisation: Floating on a Cloud. The client immediately knew she wanted to pick this visualisation, and even although she had previously experienced relaxations (in yoga, etc), she was not convinced that it would work over the phone.

OUTCOME

The client was extremely surprised at how well the session worked for her over the phone. She was very surprised, and felt "really good", and the Practitioner heard enthusiasm in her voice after the session (whereas before she sounded in quite a low mood). The client was given lots of positivity and encouragement and advised to use Lifting Your Spirits (download link – client agreed that family could help input the link to her phone) in between Wellbeing Sessions and the client was planning to do these every day when everyone was out of the house, giving her some much-needed "*me-time*" (in the client's words... "*relaxation time*" in The Haven's). The client was keen to rebook another session and was very touched at the large-print colouring book being organised for her. Another Wellbeing Session was arranged and will continue in line with the client's WIN.

The Haven

BACKGROUND

Client was teary and suffered from low mood following the death of her sister whom she had a very close relationship with. Brother died the week previously. Client's sister-in-law also died, it had just been one thing after another, trying to cope with multiple deaths in the family.

"I'm struggling."

INTERVENTION

Client was supported by The Haven through 1:1 emotional support sessions with The Haven Nurse.

Client was trying their best to cope with multiple deaths within her family but was struggling to do so. Client had previous history of anxiety and depression but had not have a review of anti- depressant medication. Nurse suggested that client contact GP to highlight how she is feeling and request a review of medication. During a follow up call from the nurse the client expressed, *"I'm slightly better, I did what you suggested, spoke with the GP who has changed my anti-depressants which has helped."*

Wellbeing Toolkit resources were also provided to this client and the Nurse provided support and guidance for to help the client learn how to use relaxation and breathing techniques to improve her emotional wellbeing.

OUTCOME

"I'm using the relaxation CD, it helps me relax but I realise I must build on it".

"I'm in a better place, I can't put into words the difference the resources and your support has made. I listen to the track 'the bluebell wood' which helps me relax and gives me focus. I take the little book of breathing out with me and if I am feeling anxious, I try the breathing technique and it reduces my anxiety, I'm then able to pick myself up and I move on. It helps a great deal so much so that my husband and son see the difference it has made to me."

Outcomes achieved by client:

- Increased ability to self-manage
- Improved emotional wellbeing
- Reduced anxiety
- Better able to cope with the effects of grief and bereavement.

BACKGROUND

Client's brother had died recently and client was experiencing surrounding familial issues, so was attending The Haven for bereavement support. (Client had previously attended The Haven.) The recent bereavement had brought emotions up from one of her adult son's death 5 years ago. Client has been socially isolated, in part caused by COVID, which has worsened her mobility issues, and anxiety. Client suffers from depression, worry, anxiety, loneliness. Client lives alone, but has good friends around her, one of her adult children lives far away and the other attends to her practical needs but doesn't provide a lot of emotional support. Client talks on phone with her siblings, family, and friends, and some friends come to visit, but client is not fit enough to venture out by herself. Client was attending The Haven having Nurse Support sessions. Client's WIN is to feel less anxious.

INTERVENTION

Following holistic assessment with The Haven Nurse, the client was internally referred for up to 4 Wellbeing Relaxation Sessions to help ease anxiety. During the initial session with The Haven Wellbeing Practitioner the client spoke emotionally of feeling very isolated, very lonely, very low and hoped to be able to relax.

Client was offered some meditation/relaxation techniques, and client chose to do a visualisation – Floating on a Cloud, whilst also utilising her toolkit eye pillow. Discussed the toolkit that had been sent previously, but client didn't have a CD player to play the LYS on, so practitioner arranged for a CD player to be sent out to the client. Practitioner encouraged client to look at the Little Book of Breathing, and to try the Full Body Scan before the next session. Client also noted that she loved to read the Martin Stepek mindfulness book that had been sent out by The Haven previously, but that she had fallen away from it, and thanked the practitioner for reminding her about it. To further support the client's engagement with mindfulness activities they were signposted to the Martin Stepek Facebook page for notifications of free online sessions. The session was very successful, so another session was booked for a week's time.

INTERVENTION

On the second session, Practitioner really praised the client, after hearing that she's been fully committed to the self-management tasks that had been set the previous week, and encouraged client to take note of all the steps she's been taking to help to improve her emotional strength. Client also attended the supermarket with her daughter, and instead of being wheeled around, was happy to walk with her stick for a short while! Client is becoming more motivated to improve her wellbeing.

It was suggested to client that as she is doing so well with her self-management and since she's feeling quite strong at the moment, to extend the time frame between sessions from 1 to 2 weeks as a means to build upon the amount of time the client has to practice her self-management techniques. By the third session, the Wellbeing Practitioner observed significant improvements in the client's wellbeing, which was further supported by positive feedback received by the client and the mutual agreement that no further wellbeing support was required at this time. This was agreed based on the understanding that she can be re-referred through her nurse.

OUTCOME

By the end of the first session, client's feedback was, *"That's brought everything back into focus again. The tears have gone, and now the sun is shining... that's calmed my soul. The Haven is my lifeline"*. Client sounded much lighter at the end of the session. Client sounded like she had relaxed and gave herself space for her mind to quiet and reset.

At the beginning of the second session, the practitioner heard that the client sounded brighter than previous. The client downloaded that it had been the anniversary of her son's death the day prior and noted that she coped with it the best she has for a long time – *"there were no tears"* - with the client putting it down to having been able to talk at the last wellbeing session and the relaxation. Client acknowledged she is reading her books more at night when she goes to bed, taking time to really absorb the words. Recently started cooking meals from scratch every night and is taking 5-15mins in the afternoon to sit with her blanket and eye pillow to *"just shut everything out"*. It was clear to the practitioner that the client had vastly improved since the first session.

OUTCOME

By the end of the second session, the client commented, *“My whole body felt like it was floating... I feel very rested now, like I’ve slept all day.... feel so calm like I could cope with anything just now....and my brain feels refreshed”*.

By the beginning of the third session, client commented on how she has been feeling *“marvellous”*. She feels motivated now, potters away all day, and has been slowly cleaning entire house. After receiving the CD player, the client now does her relaxation every day in the afternoon at 2pm. After recently speaking to with her older sister, the client was asked if she could have the pills that she was on (inferring that client was displaying audible positive signs of change).

It was clear to the practitioner that the progress of the client in managing her own tools to deal with her anxiety, and to help her relax, was substantial, and a discussion took place with the client about the need for more Wellbeing Sessions. Client fully agreed that she did not need any more sessions. The client’s self-confidence and self-motivation had drastically improved to a point where she no longer needed anyone by her side encouraging her to relax. And she sounded so positive now. The client says the Wellbeing Sessions have *“Brought me back to life again...feel back on track again”*. Client happy to end wellbeing sessions now and continue with her self-management approach. Client reiterates, since starting the wellbeing session, that she hasn’t *“Felt like this for a long time, but now feel my mind is in my body. I can’t thank The Haven enough. I think I was bordering on depression when I started [the sessions], but just feel so changed now! The response from The Haven has been brilliant. the best thing ever coming to The Haven - can’t thank you enough”*.