

Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Case Studies

Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing fund is funded by the Scottish Government and distributed by VASLan throughout South Lanarkshire





FOREWORD

JOANNE MCMANN

ENGAGEMENT LEAD

As the Third Sector Interface for South Lanarkshire, our mission is to enable volunteers, community organisations and social enterprise to deliver transformational change. In our new strategy for 2024-27, we vow to champion the third sector at every turn, demonstrating value and impact along the way.

We want to influence local and national policy shapers and decision makers in an effort to lead to a fundamental shift in power dynamics and resource allocation. People with lived and living experience, telling their incredible stories to raise awareness and understanding of how the third sector is improving, and at times saving lives, is a step in helping us achieve this goal together.

The Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund, managed by TSIs locally, supported by local partnerships and funded nationally by Scottish Government, is a lifeline for people like those who use their voice and are heard in this report. Everyday, local organisations are putting their arms around more and more local people in need of support. Whether to address inequalities, poverty or isolation, suicide prevention or responding to the costs crisis, and more.

By accessing this fund, organisations are working with local people to shape community supports which matter to them; people are connecting and building trusted relations, communities are being revitalised.

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CASE STUDY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THIS CASE STUDY

This document aims to demonstrate the necessity of Third-Sector services within South Lanarkshire and emphasise the importance of fair funding. All the information used to create this report has been collected over a period of three months and then analysed by VASLan staff to create the following detailed case studies.

PARTICIPANTS

All participants agreed to be interviewed by VASLan and their stories to be told in an anonymous and dignified manner. VASLan would like to thank the participants for their support and honesty. VASLan would also like to acknowledge the bravery shown by all participants whilst telling their stories.

All participants within the case studies are anonymised, VASLan has permission to use all photographs contained within this report.

DATA COLLECTION AND PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIAL

Data was collected via face-to-face interviews, which were recorded and then transcribed. All recordings have been erased. VASLan has sought permission from organisations to share photos and organisational statistics were appropriate within this document.



DISCLAIMER

This document contains discussions surrounding sensitive topics, including suicide, suicidal thoughts, self-harm, sexual abuse, poverty, and depression. If you find yourself affected by the content, we encourage you to seek support.

If you are affected by any of the stories within this case study please contact VASLan and our staff can signpost you towards support.





Kilbryde Hospice aims to support people, living with a life-limiting illness in South Lanarkshire to live and die well.

What Was The Funded Project?

Kilbryde Hospice was funded £20,000 to create a social prescribing support service for individuals who have received a terminal diagnosis and who have to cope thereafter with the devastating effects of a life-limiting illness.

The Kilbryde Prescribes project was a new aspect of the hospice's Compassionate Lanarkshire (CLAN) Service. Kilbryde prescribes was facilitated by a dedicated social prescribing link worker. The initial aim of the project was to support activities which focused on emotional, therapeutic, and practical support to identify and build on the strengths of the diagnosed individual and to secure the best possible quality of life for as long as possible.



Sandra Davidson
Social Prescribing Link Worker

“Without this service and people like Sandra I would be dying, alone, unsupported and with severe depression.”

Case Study 1 - Female, 71 years old

Can you tell me about the positive impact this group/service has made to your life so far?

“I was a nurse for 50 years and then got this illness, I never expected this to happen, I have never used support groups but this group is the highlight of my week. It gives me something to look forward to when my treatment is getting to me, I have made friends and it allows me to talk about parts of my illness I do not want to worry my children with. If it was not for this group I would be in a very dark place, the hospice, Sandra, and the group have given me the strength to fight my illness.”

By taking part with this group what are you hoping to gain in the future?

“Long-term friendships have been made here, I now have a phone call just about every day from a friend I have met here. We chat about everything, we laugh and we cry, I would never have found friendships if it was not for this group. I am hoping to volunteer at the hospice if and when I can. Working all my days and then suddenly not being able to work or volunteer has been hard to adjust to and it has affected my mental health. This group is not only helping me fight my illness but it also helps me as I feel I can help look after the other people here, even if it is just making them a coffee.”

Without this group being in place what would your options have been to seek support or help?

“I have never had issues with mental health, but when I was diagnosed with this disease I had no one to turn to I cannot allow my children to hear the negative thoughts that are going through my head. As a nurse, you would think I would have known about the hospice and its services. I had no idea, so when Sandra reached out she was like an angel sent to support me. I felt like she just wrapped me up and gave me life again. Without this service and people like Sandra, I would be alone, dying, unsupported and with severe depression.”

“Maybe that's why the rich live longer, they can pay for these services privately. Kilbryde need to fight for every penny and don't charge people anything. They have made my last month's liveable for my wife and for me, how can you put a price on that or worse how can you take money away from that? ”

Case Study 2 - Male, 68 years old

Can you tell me about the positive impact this group/service has made to your life so far?

“I have gone from working full time since I was 14, to now needing my wife to help me to the toilet, she doesn't mind but it is the most degrading part of this illness, I am useless. My daughter works in the third sector and got in touch with Sandra, who then came to visit me at my house. I live 10 miles from the nearest village, it's not easy getting out here so I decided to give them the time seeing as they made the effort to come to me. They spoke to me about the day service and reluctantly I allowed them to book me in, it gave my wife 4 hours away from being my carer, she only lost her mum in January and needs time to grieve. Well I loved it, I met guys in the same situation as me, we spoke about football, fishing, and pubs we drank in when we were younger. For 4 hours a week, I was not my illness, I was just me.”

By taking part with this group what are you hoping to gain in the future?

“For me, the group has finished, you can only go for so long then others need an opportunity to benefit from it. The hospice offered me another group, music therapy It's been good when I can attend and some days it makes breathing easier. My future is limited but the hospice is now looking for things to help my wife. She's not coping with the eventual outcome, and Sandra is doing everything she can to try and help. I can die knowing that alongside my children, my wife will have the extra love and support that comes from hospice and that means the world to me”

Statutory services let me and my family down. The third-sector has extended my life. However, we only knew it was here as my daughter works in the third sector. Why is it so hidden?

Case Study 2 - Male, 68 years old

Without this group being in place what would your options have been to seek support or help?

“I have paid my stamp my whole life, paid into a system that has consistently let me down. When I got told I was in palliative stages the supports disappeared. Welfare and health care have you dead before you're gone. There was no other help, we were completely alone and we only knew about the third sector support because my daughter works in it. Why are the GPs not signposting people to services? Or social work? We have even had to fight to get me a wheelchair and guess who got me one? Sandra and the hospice, not my doctor or social worker. The hospice has made my dying days better, it would be great if they were financially supported from the right places”

Q & A With Kilbryde Hospice

£305,000

How much does it cost to run the hospice on a monthly basis?

£3.8 Million

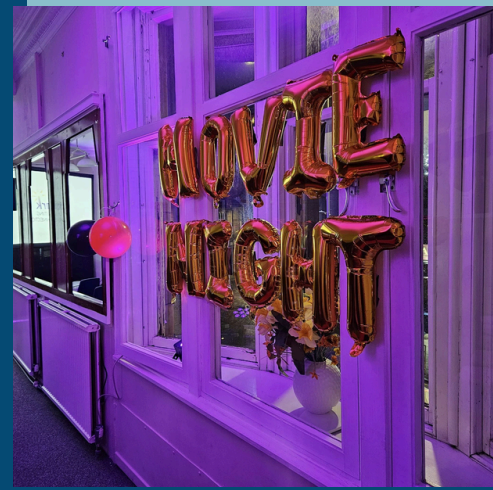
How much does the hospice need annually to remain open?

1000+

How many beneficiaries per year benefit from all hospice services?

SPARK CONNECTIONS LIMITED

Spark Connections is a social enterprise that aims to help young adults on the autistic spectrum and with other additional support needs to learn new skills, build self-esteem and confidence, meet new people and feel less isolated in their community.



What Was The Funded Project?

The creative industries project allowed young adults on the autism spectrum to build on individual skills, work as a team and create a feature film. This allowed the young adults to learn and take part in scriptwriting, directing, acting, model making, jewellery and costume design. This project concentrated on aspects of filmmaking that the participants were interested in, allowing them to focus, and build skills and knowledge. This subsequently empowered the individual, helped them grow in confidence and enhanced self-esteem.

The project brought in outside expertise and training to upskill individuals in scriptwriting, filming and editing. The scriptwriting was delivered by a published author and worked in partnership with Baby Grand Productions to train participants in detailed aspects of film, directing, acting and editing.



Premiere of Dead Funny



SPARK CONNECTIONS LIMITED

Group Case Study

Due to the vulnerable nature of this group, participants were interviewed in a group setting, with 2 workers present to support the process.

Can you tell me about the positive impact this group/service has made to your life so far?

Workers commented: *“Before this project started, some participants could not go to the shop without a volunteer, or be at home, without a parent. One participant would not enter the building to begin with and would only stand at the door and watch. By the end of the project he had taken part in the film. This was such a big moment for us at Sparks”*

“This group has made me more confident and gave me great friends. I now go to the cinema, bowling and walks with them and I have made more friends outside of Sparks.”

Participant 1, Male 18+

“I couldn't get on a bus and now I can, I get the bus on my own every day and do not need anyone to come with me.”

Participant 2, Male 18+

“We don't need the volunteers to come with us to the shop any more, we get to do this alone and can manage fine, it has taken away the fear.”

Participant 3, Male 18+

**1 in 100 people in
Scotland are
autistic***

The Scottish Government 2024

SPARK CONNECTIONS LIMITED

By taking part with this group/service, what are you hoping to gain in the future?

*"It has taught us
new skills."*

One participant
has successfully
started college

*"We want to
create another
video; I have
started script
writing for fun."*

"Over the last year due, to Sparks, our son has become more independent, coming out of our home most days and travelling on the bus and trains on his own. He also uses his own money and bank card which he could not do before, this helps him to prioritise funds every month. The biggest part is, he now has a large friendship pool that he talks to daily out with Sparks on his computer and phone calls. This has made him more outgoing and confident. All the staff have given us support and assistance to drive our son forward and become more grown up and also embed himself into the Larkhall community." Parent of Spark member.

SPARK CONNECTIONS LIMITED

“15% of adults with ASD of working age are in full-time paid employment and only 34% (aged 21–48 years) have ever participated in ‘some’ form of employment, inclusive of independent work, self-employed or sheltered employment”

An Overview of Autism in Scotland

Without this group being in place, what would your options have been to seek support or help?

“These young people would still be in a state of fear and worsening anxiety. Through this production, they have grown confident and overcame some of the issues or barriers they face on a daily basis. Engagement with education, health services and even talking to family members have all increased. This has allowed them a real chance to progress with meaningful volunteering, employment or college opportunities.” Patricia Busby, Sparks Manager.

“My son has gained confidence and enjoys being part of the group. His communication skills are improving, and he is more willing to give his opinion on occasion, this is something he finds very difficult. The group has given him a focus and he really enjoys going each time and being part of the activities. His self-esteem has improved as he feels he has a group of friends who care about him and like to see him. He would very much miss this group if it wasn't there.” - Parent of Spark Member.

To find out more about the production of “Dead Funny” the movie, please view Sparks social media pages here - <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100041893371967>

Q & A With Spark Connections

£2000pm

How much does it cost to run Spark on a monthly basis?

£45,000+*

How much does Spark need annually to remain open?

100+

How many beneficiaries per year benefit from all Spark services?

*Figure includes on cost.

TALK NOW

*Talk Now**
Break the silence

Talk Now is a Trauma-informed organisation. Talk Now provides counselling and group work to male and female survivors of trauma which includes childhood sexual abuse and domestic abuse

What Was The Funded Project?

Talk Now runs 3 groups, 2 of which are peer support. 1 group is for people nearing the end of their counselling journey so they can have continued support and the other is a male-only support group.

Talk Now runs their therapeutic group and a male support group every 2 weeks. Their groups run for an hour and allow survivors to come together and support each other. The therapeutic group was created based on the need of males who struggle to open up in group settings with mixed attendees. This group has been very powerful and has allowed men to come together to talk about their experiences and support each other. Having both groups running reduces isolation and provides a safe space for clients to express themselves.

Talk Now has a qualified trauma therapist present when the group is running, however, the purpose of the therapist is only to facilitate a safe space for the clients to share their own journeys.

Due to the vulnerability of the participants, the following interviews took place in a group setting, please be mindful that these conversations were very emotional and may act as a trigger for readers who are survivors of sexual abuse. 7 participants took the time to tell VASLan their stories, all 7 people are represented within this case study.

TALK NOW

“The NHS system, The Court System and The Victim Support System showed me the toilet door - Talk Now wrapped me up, put me back together and gave me the strength to face my abuser in court.”

Can you tell me about the positive impact this group/service has made to your life so far?

“This service, Pat and the staff here has been life-saving, I would not be here if it was not for Talk Now. I get quite emotional about it because it really is life-saving and it doesn't get the credit.”

Male 60+

“You get disappointed with people when you are referred for counselling. The first person I was referred to by NHS showed up 20 minutes late to my first session. I couldn't go back and it left me suicidal, people cannot understand how hard it is for a man to open up about sexual assault.”

Male 24+

“I went through a really hard time in 2019, my doctor put me on a waiting list for NHS support and I waited a year, I then found out they made a mistake and I would have to wait another year. This is when I found out about Talk Now. It is like phoning a mate, the conversations are hard but they come out easily. I get to be emotional and feel so supported. I have dipped in and out of the service for years”.

Male 24+

“Iv never been able to trust anyone the way I trust my worker at Talk Now, I wouldn't leave the house before Talk Now and now I am in the gym 5 nights a week and I know I can cope with the hard moments.”

Male 55+

TALK NOW

“I wish I could take a wee piece of my heart and give it to Talk Now because they fixed mine. I know my self-worth now, I wasn't living before, I existed, I am living now”

Can you tell me about the positive impact this group/service has made to your life so far?

*“I've been suffering from an eating disorder and severe anxiety, I could not leave my house for more than 10 minutes, I have had 3 courses of counselling through the NHS. After these sessions I still could not eat or travel, I could not live life. Eventually, I was suicidal, my GP referred me to Talk Now, it was very hard at the start due to my fear of leaving the house but with the help of Pat I have never missed a session, I have opened up about my abuse which I could never do before, every week I feel even better and this year I managed to go on a cruise. This is such a big achievement for me. While on the cruise I wrote down all the negative thoughts, all the abuse, all the hurt. I ripped it up and threw it overboard. I let it go. Talk Now gave me the ability to let go.” **Female, 55+***

*“It's really hard to put into words what Talk Now do for peoples lives. They give you a life, they save a life, I call them my earth angels. I remember hearing Pat's voice and I knew instantly she was going to help me, I knew I could trust her. My abuse was historical and I had never told anyone, I attempted to take my life and I was ready to do it again, It was a last resort and I reached out to Talk Now and within 24 hours I was seen. I walked out my first session feeling that I had someone to talk to without feeling shame, fear or judgement.” **Female 40+***

*“I would never ask anyone for help, I have a really supportive family but the only person I could put all my ghost to was Pamela at Talk Now. I feel a rebirth of my self-worth because I had nothing, I put a face on for my family, and I have carried guilt, shame and blame for 30 years and it took coming here to offload that. Every day is a positive, I wake up every day now focusing on the positive. I wish I had met these people a long long time ago. I see my values now, I can see my world now. From the first day I walked through the door I just knew I was going to be ok. This group is run by amazing people, NHS could not help, there's no words for what Talk Now do for people.” **Female 50+***

"I faced the high court, I won and my abuser was sent to jail. Talk Now saw me through that. Without Talk now my abuser would be walking the streets"

TALK NOW

Can you tell me about the positive impact this group/service has made to your life so far?

"Some of the stories you hear at the group are so harrowing, the impact of this abuse drives us to the brink. I was referred to Talk Now by the specialist police team, I contacted Talk Now with that referral and basically Talk Now stopped me from killing myself while going through the court process. The court process took 2 and a half years and Talk Now kept me sane and saw me weekly. If I had not seen them I would not be here, I have a wonderful GP but they know that they cannot offer me the support that Talk Now does. I can now face the world, I faced the high court, I won and my abuser was sent to jail for years. Talk now saw me through that. Without Talk Now my abuser would be walking the streets, I would not be here, I would be dead. I am on my 3rd lot of therapy here, they won't turn anyone away they will always make sure that people come first, and the door will always be open for the people who need it here." **Male 50+**

"I suffered from childhood abuse and went through high court cases as a result, everything I went through was normalised. As I grew up alcohol and cocaine became my crutch, it gave me freedom. This led to relationship and employment issues, In 2017 my addiction was at its worst and I ended up hospitalised 15 times, I wanted to die but I didn't know how to do it and at the same time, I didn't want to die. There was an angel in the NHS who gave me Talk Now's number, and all the walls I built up over the years, Pat took one brick away at the time, and she made me realise this was not my fault. This is the best feeling ever, there is no smoke screen here, over the last year Talk Now has given me a gateway, without talk now I would not be here. I am now studying counselling at college because I want to give back, I want to help people. My life went from being unmanageable to now having hope." **Male 40+**

TALK NOW

Without this group being in place what would your options have been to seek support or help?

“We would all be dead”

All 7 participants commented on their historic self-harm and their suicidal attempts. All 7 participants stated that Talk Now saved their lives.

Q & A With Talk Now

£16,289pm

How much does it cost to run Talk Now on a monthly basis?

£195,000pa

How much does Talk Now need annually to remain open?

250

How many beneficiaries per year benefit from all services?

Over 50%

How many of your clients are referred to you by the NHS?*

***Talk Now receive no funding from the NHS or Health and Social Care**

“
The Heart of
Africa is the heart
to give back to our
community.”



HEART OF AFRICA & LARKHALL AND DISTRICT VOLUNTEER GROUP (LDVG) PARTNERSHIP

Larkhall and District Volunteer Group (LDVG) promote the health and well-being of the community in Larkhall and surrounding areas. The services provided are a lunch club, call line service for individuals suffering social isolation, community transport, support groups for individuals to meet up and take part in activities and a handyperson service for elderly individuals requiring small D.I.Y jobs.

Heart of Africa facilitates cultural exchanges and events between Scottish and African communities in order to encourage racial harmony and community cohesion between ethnic minorities and Scottish communities while raising awareness of the influence of Scottish culture on African culture.

Events including cultural gatherings/meals at venues throughout South Lanarkshire and visiting local schools, homeless units and community groups take place regularly but at no specific time/date throughout the year.

What Was The Funded Project?

Heart in The Community Café was established to provide lunch clubs that cater to the needs of the local population. With a growing waiting list of individuals looking to join, it became clear that additional funding was necessary to expand this essential service for the residents of Larkhall. These lunch clubs are open to anyone in the Larkhall area who values a warm, healthy, and nutritious meal along with the chance to socialise. Our attendees typically include the elderly, vulnerable, lonely, isolated, and housebound community members, many of whom face physical and/or mental disabilities or life-altering illnesses.

The lunch club is supported by the LDVG mobility-friendly community transport fleet, which ensures that members are picked up from their homes and brought to the club. In addition to benefiting those who attend, the lunch clubs provide peace of mind for family members, knowing their loved ones have enjoyed companionship and at least one healthy hot meal each day. LDVG, receives referrals from various sources, including the hospital discharge service, GP link workers, GPs, social workers, families, and friends.

The lunch clubs also offer a wide range of volunteering opportunities, including front-of-house roles, transportation (drivers and escorts), kitchen porter positions, and trainee cook roles.

“Mr T saved my life, he made me realise I didn't want to die I just didn't know how to live without my wife”

HEART OF AFRICA & LDVG PARTNERSHIP

Case Study 1 - Male, 62 years old

Can you tell me a little about yourself and what brought you to use this group?

“My wife passed away last year, she was my life. I worked in an industry all my days and when that industry collapsed she said I got depressed. I used to laugh and tell her men don't get depressed. Anyway, I was on the dole and life was hard. I finally got a job and we lived our lives, things got better, she was great, and she would light up a room just by walking in she was beautiful, classically beautiful. We never had kids and never needed them she was my world. She got sick, and the day she died darkness hit me, I wanted life to get darker, I didn't want to be here without her. I started drinking, closed myself off to the world and was ready to die. Sitting on the couch one day, house a mess, drunk and realised I had not eaten for days and saw the LDVG bus in my street, why not I thought, I'm skint so I will go there to get food. My wife used to talk about the work LDVG do so I knew I would get a meal, no one wants to die hungry. I was ready to end things at this point. I found out when the lunch club was on, came along and the rest is history. These people saved me, I don't buy all the spiritual stuff but there is a wee bit of me that believes my wife made me look out the window that day, a wee part of me that believes she is not ready for me to join her yet.”

“Mr T saved my life, he made me realise I didn't want to die I just didn't know how to live without my wife”

HEART OF AFRICA & LDVG PARTNERSHIP

Case Study 1 - Male, 62 years old

Can you tell me about the positive impact this group/service has made to your life so far?

Mr T does more than cook, he spoke to me and over several weeks made me realise it's okay to be sad, sadness isn't a weakness and doesn't mean depression it just means I'm sad because my best friend died. He made me see that I was lonely, and loneliness was feeding my drinking. I booked an appointment with my GP and was comfortable to open up about the way I felt. I didn't want medication so I committed to speaking about the pain I was in with Mr T and the friends I had made here and making regular GP appointments to track my progress. Lunch group is attended by all these people (28 on this day) and they are now my family. I made a friend here who lives down from me, I never knew him, but he's never out of my house now, his wife is always making sure I'm eating and we sit in the gardens when it's nice. I'm having Christmas dinner this year with him and their family and actually looking forward to it, who wants to spend Christmas alone?”

Has this group left you with better coping techniques or skills you use in your day-to-day life? If so, what are these?

“I thought there was no such thing as depression in men, not big guys like me, this group has shown me that on the days when life gets really hard, it's okay to ask for help, to have a wee cry or to tell people. I definitely don't want to die anymore, I don't even think I wanted to before I just didn't know there was another way to live. Lunch club and all these people have shown me there is.”

Without this group being in place what would your options have been to seek support or help?

“I would probably be medicated legally or illegally, possibly an alcoholic and possibly dead. I truly believe this group, these people and Mr T have saved my life.”

“I would be a prisoner in my own home if it wasn’t for this lunch club and for LDVG bus service. I would just be sitting at home waiting to die.”

HEART OF AFRICA & LDVG PARTNERSHIP

Case Study 2 - Female, 70+ years old

Can you tell me a little about yourself and what brought you to use this group?

“I came with my friend, we have been friends for many years, and we wanted to get out of the house and do something. At our age there is nothing to do, everything is too expensive. We started coming to a fitness class at LDVG but the funding stopped, we didn’t know about the lunch club until Sandra at LDVG told us. We decided to give it a chance and loved it. I don’t really get out much my mobility isn’t great, Sandra organised it so that the bus will pick me up. It makes me feel special, I get picked up and dropped off right at my doorstep and the volunteer always makes sure I get in my house ok.”

Can you tell me about the positive impact this group/service has made to your life so far?

“I live alone and it's hard to see friends, I'm not very mobile. I would be a prisoner in my own home if it wasn’t for this lunch club and the LDVG bus service. I would just be sitting at home waiting to die. I love this group, they are my family and my friends. One time I never answered my door and the bus knew there was something wrong. I was just having a wee low day and didn’t want to be a burden, Mr T made sure I had food delivered to me so I could eat and they made sure I was here the following week. You can’t pay for that kind of service. I know if I fall someone will find me, it might not be till a Thursday but I will be found.”

Without this group being in place what would your options have been to seek support or help?

“I would be very lonely, me and my friend would never see each other, we live at different ends of the village. When you are my age you know that dying is going to be sooner than later, I don’t want to die alone and with this lot, I know I won't.”

Q & A With Heart of Africa

£4,150pm

How much does it cost to run the Heart of Africa on a monthly basis?

£38,000

How much does your organisation need annually to remain open?

100

How many people benefited from the projects funded by the communities mental health and wellbeing fund?



The Community Café - partnership between Thornton Road Community Centre and Healthy Valleys

Thornton Road Community Centre is a community facility based in Kirkmuirhill, which offers a venue to be hired for various functions. There is also a community café within the centre and other activities take place, such as: craft classes; line dancing; over 60's clubs; etc.

What Was The Funded Project?

Healthy Valleys and Thornton Road were funded to expand the Community Café in Kirkmuirhill to meet local demand thereby providing additional peer support and education on how to cope and maintain better mental health.

Thornton Road Community Centre (Kirkmuirhill)

Community Café is a free warm space for anyone to attend, receive support, a hot lunch, tea/coffee, learn about and signpost to other mental health and other services which impact Mental health. The cafe acts as a place to help people meet up with others to reduce isolation and loneliness and promote community development and community spirit with its participants.

Healthy Valleys took a support role within this partnership, being an established organisation Healthy Valleys used their expertise to give extensive help to Thornton Road enabling the café and partnership to be a success.

The Community Café - partnership between Thornton Road Community Centre and Healthy Valleys

*"I was pretty much at
rock bottom and didn't
think anyone would miss
me if I wasn't here
anymore"*

Case Study 1 - Male, 73 Years old.

Can you tell me about the positive impact this group/service has made to your life so far?

"I was referred to Healthy Valleys about two years ago by my Doctor. I lived alone and had no family and only a few friends. The friends I had were through my work so since I retired we haven't been in touch much and they live in and about Glasgow so far away. I live in a small village and there was nothing for me to do. I wasn't very good at going to groups - they were not for me and I'm not good at making friends. I was really depressed, hardly ever left the house and the doctor suggested a referral to Healthy Valleys. A really nice lassie from Healthy Valleys rang me up and we arranged to meet up to discuss my referral. I honestly can't remember the last time someone called me. I was unsure if I would go but plucked up the courage to go. We had a cup of tea and chatted about how I was feeling. I was pretty much at rock bottom and didn't think anyone would miss me if I wasn't here anymore. She made me feel like someone cared and she mentioned a couple of groups that I might like to try. To be honest I wasn't really ready for that and didn't think it would ever be for me. She suggested a course that would help me build up my confidence so I gave it a go.

It was called 5 Steps to Wellbeing and she buddied me along to the first couple of sessions and I have never looked back. I couldn't have gone in without her. I met other people who were in similar situations to me and it gave me a purpose every week. The course was good and I started to feel a bit better about myself I knew I had to keep pushing myself to get out because I was enjoying seeing and chatting to other people and didn't really want the course to stop. The lassie from Healthy Valleys invited me to go along to the community café that they run. I now go every week and everyone has made me feel really welcome. It's good to chat and they always have an activity to keep us busy although I'm not so keen on the craft activities I love it when we go out for a walk! The lassie also connected me to the Men's Shed and I go there twice a week now. It's great banter and I feel proud to help build and fix things. I don't feel so useless anymore."

The Community Café - partnership between Thornton Road Community Centre and Healthy Valleys

"I was in a really dark place. I couldn't see a future for me and hated my life and where I lived. I was lonely."

Case Study 1 - Male, 73 Years old.

What would your life have looked like without the support you received from Healthy Valleys?

"I don't know. I was in a really dark place. I couldn't see a future for me and hated my life and where I lived. I was lonely and just stayed in and watched TV. I really like going to the Community Café and Men's Shed – it's really the only time I leave the house, although I do sometimes also meet up with others now and again and go to the café in Lanark. I also like to try and make others feel welcome at the café and at the shed cause I know how it felt to come and try something new and what a lifeline it is."




“ If it wasn't for these groups, I wouldn't leave my house. Really good to be in company with lovely people. **”**

“ I now feel part of a community and I'm not as lonely as I was. Everyone at the groups are so friendly and helpful. They will never know how much they have saved me. **”**

“ Being involved in Healthy Valleys has really helped me, meeting up with you and going walks has given me the confidence to go out on my own and made me realise I enjoy walking and it gets me out. **”**

“ I realised I wasn't the only one struggling and I started to do more to help my mental health and anxiety, I now have tools that I use when I'm feeling a bit low. I'm still on my journey but feel 100% better than I did last year – they are the best help I've ever had. **”**

“ This group helped me to see that I'm not alone in the way I feel and has given me tips about how to understand how I feel the way I do. **”**

“ I never thought I was going to enjoy any of this, I was so lonely but at the same time, I couldn't face people. Without you calling me and encouraging me to attend I would still have been in the house alone. I've not just enjoyed it, it's been life changing, I've loved it! **”**

Q & A With Healthy Valleys

£932

How much does it cost to run the Café on a monthly basis?

£11,184

How much does the café need annually to remain open?

1300

How many beneficiaries per year benefit from all services?



HARLEESHILL COMMUNITY HUB

Harleeshill Community Hub was opened to bring a much-needed asset into the Hareleeshill area, offering a range of community-led services to the local community.

What Was The Funded Project?

Hareleeshill is a social housing scheme defined as being in the worst 5% of the SIMD. There were no suitable facilities for the community to use and before the hub was funded there were no plans to make any available by South Lanarkshire Council. The successful funding allowed a partnership between Larkhall Baptist Church and The Church at the Cross to purchase the lease for the unused Gospel Hall which sits in the middle of the scheme. The initiative was supported by Larkhall Community Network, made up of local third sector, public sector and private sector organisations, who offered their skills, resources and experience.

The hall is now used by local people for a range of activities and events aimed at building relationships, offering life skills, and supporting people with mental health issues and those struggling financially because of the cost of living crisis.

The Hub offers to support people to learn basic life skills which include such things as cooking on a budget, cleaning, literacy and numeracy, parenting skills, weekly budgeting etc. Support services use the space to advise on and raise awareness of a range of issues that help people understand what help is available to them, how to access it and the benefits of doing so.

The hub provides access to local support, and signposting to the relevant organisations. Planned activities help to improve confidence, self-respect, and personal value, reduce social isolation, and have a positive impact on the life of the whole family.

***“This is the first
time in 20 years
I have been
properly
happy.”***

Harleeshill Community Hub

Case study 1 - Male 25+

Can you tell me about the positive impact this group has made to your life so far?

“The adult literacy group has been really positive, it has helped me be more independent. At the moment I rely on my mum to fill out my benefit forms and read my letters from DWP. By taken part in the adult literacy group it has helped me deal with financial matters on my own. I have also been given part-time employment by the hub and now help to look after the hall when the hub is open. I love working here, it helps me get out of the house a couple of nights a week.

I also take part in the bingo which helps me with my social skills, for a long time I had depression and it was bad, I would not leave the house or speak to anyone. The bingo has helped me build my confidence and make friends, I came to the bingo because people who come to adult literacy invited me, and this was really nice. I am really proud of myself for getting employment here, it shows that I have something to offer and gives me a purpose in life.”

Without this group being in place what would your options have been to seek support or help?

“I would have really struggled, my mental health would probably be really bad, I would be staying in the house and not interacting with anyone. My mental health was at such a low point, it was soul-destroying. I attempted to go back to college but it was too stressful I could not cope. This support and the job I have gained out of it has helped to change my life. Even my mum has said this has made a difference to me, this is the first year in about 20 years I have been properly happy.”

HARLEESHILL COMMUNITY HUB

Case study 2 - Female 30+

Can you tell me about the positive impact this group has made to your life so far?

I take part in the adult literacy, help with the toddlers' groups, take part in bingo and do the craft group on Friday. I came to the group because of my special needs, I am shy and wanted to get to know people. I started coming to try and be able to do things for myself. Coming to the hub makes me happy, I have started an art class and thought I could never be able to do art but now my work is really good. I suffer from bad anxiety, I was in a really bad place at one point. Coming to the group has helped me be happy, I find it hard to say how I feel but when I am doing craft group I go from saying I can't do that to saying - how did I do that? It just makes me really happy. All the groups make me feel like I can actually do things because when we start I say I can't but then I prove that I can.

My family have commented on how much stronger I am and how much better I am, I don't know where I get the strength from but the groups here really help me come out my depression and see the best in life.

Without this group being in place what would your options have been to seek support or help?

I would have been stuck, I feel as if there has never been help away from my family before. No one has been able to help and now I feel better, I feel happy. I can help look after my mum now I get so much happiness and always feel welcome here. I am not treated differently from anyone else here and I can do the things that other people can do.

Q & A With Harleeshill Community Hub

£5,100

How much does it cost to run the hub on a monthly basis?

£63,000

How much does the hub need annually to remain open?

1100

How many beneficiaries per year benefit from all hub services?



AGAPE WELLBEING

Agape Wellbeing is a registered charity dedicated to helping the local community, from the very young to older people, achieve positive wellbeing and mental health, through a variety of health and wellbeing services and activities.

What Was The Funded Project?

TATTA - Tackling Adversity Through The Arts

TATTA aimed to begin to improve mental health and well-being in adults through participating in painting activities. The activities were held twice weekly between Agape Wellbeing and the Village Centre and were tutored by artist Harry. Both these venues also held warm banks for people to attend, and looked to facilitate 25 people a week. Agape provided hot and cold drinks and at the Village Centre, hot and cold drinks along with snacks.

Drew McKinney, manager at Agape - *“On reflection, the impact that this project has had, has been tremendous, I have seen people grow in confidence in the groups, which has led to their confidence and trust outside of the group, taking massive positive steps forward. They have interacted really well with their fellow peers and built really positive friendships through their enjoyment of art. The teacher for the classes has also added to this, through his calmness, patience and positive approach to each class, this has further bestowed confidence in those who have participated in the project to present.”*

*Looking at the art I
created reminds me of a
moment I was happy, it
reminds me my
depression is not forever*

AGAPE WELLBEING

Group Case Study

Can you tell me about the positive impact this group/service has made to your life so far?

I suffer from anxiety and depression Drew suggested various groups for me to try and I trust Drew. I had done art before and went to meet Harry. Harry takes you through it step by step and this was great for my mental health. It gives me a boost and puts me on a high for the weekend I cannot wait for the Monday when we start again.

Harry is bouncy and happy and he gets you through the class, he gives me something to take home which I did and it makes me feel good to look at the art I make. When I get down at home and look at the art it reminds me of a time I was happy and reminds me that my depression will not last forever, it will get better.

Without Harry being here I would have gone to the shops and then went back home again. Coming here has helped my life to get better all the time and stopped me from going back the way

My life would have taken a different turn if it was not for Harry and AGAPE, it would have taken a darker turn.

The third sector offer free support, reduce social isolation, improve mental health and bring people together, saving statutory services money. We are all about putting people first and listening to them

AGAPE WELLBEING

“The NHS are on their hands and knees with budget cuts. There are a lot of mental health problems and suicide happening. There is a lot of low self-esteem, bullying, and anxiety so we have decided to set up a free workshop called Mind Time that focuses on people with anxiety, low self-esteem and depression. This is run every Thursday its a 6-month hold and is over 8 workshops. This takes away a huge pressure on the NHS here in East Kilbride, people are coming here for signposting support and not the GP, we are also doing the menopause support class that is taking a lot of pressure off the doctors and GPs, and we have females coming who do not want to take anti-depressants for menopause but pressure on GPs means it often the only support they can offer.

The third sector and us at AGAPE by offering free support, reducing social isolation, improving mental health and bringing people together are saving statutory services money. We are all about putting people first and listening to them.”

Drew McKinney, Centre Manager at Agape

Q & A With Agape

£6,000pm

How much does it cost to run Agape on a monthly basis?

£76,000

How much does Agape need annually to remain open?

6669

How many beneficiaries per year benefit from all services?

3484

How many people benefited from the projects funded by the communities mental health and wellbeing fund?

CONNECTED EAST KILBRIDE PARTNERSHIP

**Healthy and Active, Kilbryde Hospice, EK CAB,
Moncreiff Parish Church and Calderwood Baptist
Church**

What Was The Funded Project?

Healthy and Active in East Kilbride was granted funding from the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund to deliver a partnership 'Test for change' in the Calderwood neighbourhood area of East Kilbride.

The partners of Connected East Kilbride were Healthy and Active in East Kilbride, Kilbryde Hospice, EK Citizens Advice, Moncreiff Parish Church and Calderwood Baptist Church. Based on the idea of building a different relationship with local people. The test was targeted at working seamlessly together to make a measurable difference to local people's mental health and wellbeing and connecting people with non-medicalised support within their neighbourhood.

The phrase 'What matters to you' was quickly adopted as the strapline of Connected Calderwood. This is a worldwide approach to understanding what matters to an individual in their life. It's about having meaningful conversations with individuals, as well as their families and carers.

This case study will focus on the Chill Out Club and Kettles On Club.

Other Services provided through the partnership include:

EK Community Food Bank / Community Café

EKCAB CONNECTED CALDERWOOD OUTREACH SERVICE

LAMH & EK Connected Living Life to the Full at Calderwood Moncrieff Church

MORPHFIT Gentle Movement Classes

ChatMPC

CAP Care

CONNECTED EAST KILBRIDE PARTNERSHIP

**Healthy and Active, Kilbryde Hospice, EK CAB,
Moncreiff Parish Church and Calderwood Baptist
Church**



The Chill Out Club, since moving into a larger hall, has seen its numbers increase from an average of 12 in attendance each week to an average of 20. It is also more accessible for those with additional physical needs. We have received several referrals from the local GP Community Links Worker. We are now also hosting a Mental Health Wellbeing group from the South Lanarkshire Council, promoting and advocating for it through our social media and congregations.

The Kettle's On Club

The Kettle's On began as a response to the request for warm spaces across the town and after a slow start, it has grown into a safe space for people across Calderwood to enjoy food, chat and friendship. It was viewed with some suspicion in the beginning because it was seen as 'charity' but moving into the partnership with Connected Calderwood it became more established as a community-based safe space. Over time we have moved from a smaller space to a larger space and more recently into our new bright café style space. We welcome now around 25 people most weeks (with numbers varying from 15-50 each week) and for many it supports removing the isolation they feel. For one married couple, it gives them someone new to talk to and for another he is able to get a hot meal and a chat on his way home. We have also increased the number of volunteers as The Kettle's On has grown. The funding helps us keep the café style space running making it accessible to all. Soup provision has increased from one small pot to two large pots and toast, biscuits etc provided. Recently, Universal Connections has shared their excess provision of rolls, bread and cakes with us, reducing food waste and helping with costs.





CONNECTED EAST KILBRIDE PARTNERSHIP

**Healthy and Active, Kilbryde Hospice, EK CAB, Moncreiff
Parish Church and Calderwood Baptist Church**

Group Interviews were conducted asking several people from the Kettle On club and the Chill Out Club

Can you tell me about the positive impact this group/service has made to your life so far?

"I love coming here, we play board games, make friends, chat about anything and everything. We get fed, and Sarah always makes sure we are well-fed and warm. Sometimes we have young mums that come and I get to have a wee cuddle from the babies, this is lovely because it's helping the community connect when normally old and young just walk past each other on the street"

Female 65+

"I would never speak to anyone if the connected Calderwood wasn't funded. I am on my own at home, and the link workers at the GP sign posted me here, I was lonely and really sad and my mental health was very poor. These people are now my family I can't wait for a Thursday, it also means for one day I am not spending money on heating coming into winter"

Female 65+

"There is no judgment, we don't ask why anyone is here, each week someone from the group makes soup and this is shared with everyone. It feels like a community, like the ones we lived in during the 70s. It's a family, not a club"

Male 65+

"Without the Chill Out Club, I would never have had the confidence to attend the Kettle On Cafe, the friends I have met have helped me get back on my feet and support me with my mental health"

Male 50+



CONNECTED EAST KILBRIDE PARTNERSHIP

Healthy and Active, Kilbryde Hospice, EK CAB, Moncreiff
Parish Church and Calderwood Baptist Church

Without this group being in place what would your options have been to seek support or help?

"Not so much support but have you ever done nothing? Just at home and done nothing over and over again? It's hard, you get so low, stop eating properly, struggle to find a reason to get out of bed and wonder what the purpose of even being alive is. That is my life without this"

Female 65+

"I was referred to the Chill Out Club, we talk about our mental health but not in a counselling kind of way. It's just normal people, who are living through the same or similar issues. We laugh, there is banter, and we can be serious but most of the time it's just fun. Laughing the issues away has been better than any pill the GP has tried to put me on"

Male 50+

"The doctors, NHS, prescription medication, these would have been my options. So Chill out has saved NHS money by helping me."

Male 65+

"I would have just been at home, with nothing to do. At my age alone is scary place to be."

Female 65+



How Does The Partnership Work?

A summary of how things worked in Connected Calderwood



Comprehensively map the Calderwood area



Train people in Community Led Support



Engage with key organisations



Increase services, groups, activities



Identify gaps in provision



Increased capacity to meet needs of community



Reduced isolation, increased sense of purpose



Increased income



Increased knowledge of Mental Health



"Feel like part of the family."

"They have helped me."

"Thank you so much."

To do all of these:

And achieved these:

We used all of these:

Funding



Staff



Expertise



Willingness to collaborate

Existing relationships



We counted the increase in these:



No. people trained



No. volunteers



No. new & sustained services, groups, activities

No. What Matters to You conversations



No. people attending different activities



In time we will achieve these:

Improved mental health and wellbeing



Strengthened community resilience



Calderwood people support
Calderwood people



Increased connectedness



VASLan Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund Statistics

£2,827,751.50
distributed to
South
Lanarkshire's
Third Sector over
3 years

440 Applications
received over 3 years
asking for a total of
£4,080,483.47

242 Awarded
Applications over
3 years In South
Lanarkshire

24 New
Partnerships
formed
throughout South
Lanarkshire

45 New projects
created in
Cambuslang and
Rutherglen

66 New projects
created in
Clydesdale

47 New projects
created in East
Kilbride

74 New projects
created in
Hamilton

10 New projects
created South
Lanarkshire Wide

Conclusion

This report shows that the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing funding has made a valuable contribution to achieving the outcomes set out in the Scottish Governments aim to tackle the impact of social isolation, loneliness and the mental health inequalities made worse by the pandemic.

The organisations funded have worked to deliver activities that are making a significant difference to the people accessing them, delivering services that maximise the strengths and community connections to effectively engage people who may be furthest from engaging with public services.

It's clear that through this fund we can build on community-based assets that have the ability to influence and change the health of our communities through multiple pathways, although currently we do not know the magnitude and nature of these changes may have on the health of our communities or on savings to public services and society in generally.

Over the previous three years, this fund has effectively facilitated 24 partnership applications, thereby fostering collaborative efforts among organisations to fortify the communities they serve. Given the increasingly challenging financial landscape for third-sector organisations, it is paramount that this fund continues to advocate for partnership working, thereby facilitating smarter funding, and helping to create a resilient third sector for the communities of South Lanarkshire.

Notice of Thanks

VASLan would like to thank the following organisations for taking part in this impact case study and thank the brave participants who have shared their stories.

Connected East Kilbride Partnership:

Moncrieff Parish Church - theoffice@moncreiffparishchurch.co.uk

Calderwood Baptist Church - info@calderwoodbaptist.co.uk

East Kilbride Citizens Advice - administration@eastkilbridecab.casonline.org.uk

Kilbryde Hospice - info@kilbrydehospice.org.uk

Healthy and Active - info@healthyandactive.org.uk

Larkhall and District Volunteer Group

admin@ldvg.org.uk

Healthy Valleys

info@healthyvalleys.org.uk

Kilbryde Hospice

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Hareleeshill Community Hub

hchlarkhall@gmail.com

Spark Connections Limited

sparksconnections@aol.com

Agape Wellbeing

info@agapewellbeing.com

Heart of Africa

heartofafricauk@gmail.com

Talk Now

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