



UNITING COMMUNITIES
HALE. CAFE WEST. COMMUNITY WORKS

ANNUAL REPORT

YEAR 2

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Summary

In year 2 the Uniting Communities project has continued to thrive. We have been joined by new Connect Workers at Community Works and Café West and a new CEO at Community Works who have quickly got involved with the project, bringing new ideas and fresh perspective. Alongside the groups set up last year, we have continued to set up new groups and offer bitesize sessions. Volunteers are becoming more embedded in the project, and it is encouraging to see their personal development. Whilst the centres have many regular attenders, we have been working hard to introduce new people to each centre and it has been encouraging to see groups become established with mainly new members. As we look forward to Year 3, we are planning how we will transfer some of our existing groups to volunteer led, in order to increase staff capacity.

PARENT CARER COFFEE MORNING

Come along to meet other parents caring for a child with SEND.

Share your experiences and get support from new friends.

Hear from guest speakers from local organisations.

Tuesdays, 9:15 – 10:15 (term time only)
Community Works





WELLBEING WEDNESDAYS

Have fun. Meet new people.
Try different activities.



Every Wednesday, 10 - 12
HALE, 1 Westgate, Shipley
Contact Catherine to sign up
catherine.haslam@haleproject.org.uk
01274 271088





Community Health Event

A New Year, A New Healthier You!

Join us in January for the launch of our New session **Healthier Horizons**.

We are hosting a FREE Community Health Event, and you are invited!
Expect , advise, referrals, beneficial information freebies and more...

Detail Information:

12TH JANUARY

11AM-2PM

Café West Healthy Living Centre
Wanstead Cres Allerton,
BD15 7PA



Contact Information
01274 488499
abony@cafewest.org.uk



FREE BUFFET & REFRESHMENTS

Engagement

We have continued to use a range of different ways to engage with the community. At Community Works door knocking has continued, staff have also spent time at local GP surgeries and the park speaking to residents. Café West have used a community survey to gather feedback on the needs of the community, with 112 responses. The response to this survey provided valuable insight into community priorities, clearly highlighting demand from parents and carers for more under-5s sessions, interactive coffee mornings, and additional health and wellbeing activities. Alongside introducing more health and wellbeing themed pop ups, including the Locala sexual health bus and Bradford College, Café West have also invited Taplin’s Butchers to run a pop up stall, allowing another opportunity to engage with residents who would not usually access the centre. Café West have also engaged with existing centre users about potential new sessions. Through the HAF program the Connect Worker has been able to meet parents and signpost them to relevant support, this has provided an opportunity to meet new parents, alongside regular attenders. HALE have engaged with the community through attending and organising health events, alongside other local organisations. Staff have also doorknocked the local area in advance of events to promote attendance.

General Engagement

- **Total number of survey responses (Cafe West): 112**

- **Total number of people engaged with: 2994**
- **Total number of doors knocked on: 1040**
 - **Conversations with residents: 337**
 - **No answer, leaflet dropped off: 703**
- **Conversations at GP practise: 204**
- **Conversations with professionals: 503**

- **Total number of signposting conversations:**
 - **Financial support: 88**
 - **Adult education: 236**
 - **Health: 301**
 - **Social groups: 254**
 - **Exercise groups: 68**
 - **Childcare: 225**



Events

HALE have received additional funding from WISHH Community Partnership to run a series of health roadshows, these events have allowed local residents to access a number of health checks and speak with local organisations. We have been able to directly signpost to support, introducing residents to organisations who may be able to help. We have also taken a coordinating role for a blood pressure machine which rotates around Shipley community centres, increasing footfall as members of the public drop in to use it. Bolton Woods Community Centre have fed back that individuals who attended the health roadshow have continued to attend the centre.

Five Lane Community Partnership funding has supported 5 events at Community Works. These have been based on themes such as Women’s Health, Winter Health and Men’s Health.

Café West ran a Sendiverse event to celebrate the opening of their sensory room with approximately 65 attendees. In addition, a health event was organised to launch the Healthier Horizons programme which was accessed by 65 people, receiving information from 24 stalls.

Organising events has allowed us to engage with members of the public, and raise awareness of the project with local organisations.

Uniting Communities events

- **Total number of events: 12**
- **Total number of attendees: 558**
- **Total number of signposting conversations by UC staff and partner organisations:**
 - **Financial support: 142**
 - **Adult education: 7**
 - **Health: 739**
 - **Social groups: 77**
 - **Exercise groups: 17**
 - **Childcare: 7**
- **Number of atrial fibrillation checks: 100**
- **Number of BMI checks: 106**
- **Hepatitis C checks: 113**



St Hughs Community Centre health roadshow



Womens health event at Community Works

Groups

We have run a further 2 Pathways to Wellbeing groups at Café West and Community Works, we have also received additional funding to set up ‘Walking the Pathways to Wellbeing’ which will start in the autumn.

Café West have run a Healthier Horizon’s programme which has incorporated a number of new & existing groups, with feedback from this time limited programme used to determine which groups local residents would like to continue. Healthier Horizons has helped reestablished existing groups, including Craft & Connect and Mindful Movement, increasing regular attendance. The Craft & Connect group has been supported to increase from 4 attendees to 12-18 on average, the group also has a renewed focus. A new Try the Trains group was set up, giving group members the skills and knowledge to plan train journeys, and then enjoy trips together to put their learning to the test. Café West have also set up new Bingo and Coffee Morning sessions.

New groups

- Pathways to Wellbeing (Café West)
- Try the trains (Café West)
- Bingo (Café West)
- Coffee Morning (Café West)
- Pathways to Wellbeing (Community Works)
- Parent Carer coffee morning (Community Works)
- Festival of the dead (Community Works)
- Men United (Community Works)
- Mindful Lens (HALE)
- Wellbeing Wednesday (HALE)



Cafe West Try the Trains

Alongside setting up new groups, the Café West Connect Worker is supporting long standing groups- Stroke group, Timeless Tuesdays, Craft & Connect and Mindful Movement. Her involvement in these groups has enabled group members to benefit from additional signposting. Typically one attendee will ask a question linked to their personal circumstances and alongside answering this the connect worker will share the information with the whole group.

We ran a fixed length group at Community Works with Cecil Greens Arts and The University of Bradford. The Festival of the Dead involved 5 death café workshops, a safe and open space to talk about death and everything related, followed by a parade involving the lanterns created during the workshops. We have also set up a new group for parent carers at Community Works. Organisations have been invited to share their work and inform parents of available support, sessions have included Carers’ Resource, Living Well and other local support organisations. We are working with Bradford Stronger Together to facilitate this group, the positive impacts of this new relationship are already apparent as Community Works were able to offer their hall to BST to host their 4th anniversary party free of charge. Doorknocking around Community Works highlighted the need for a men’s group, this was set up with additional ABCD funding. The group is focussed on three key themes- food & friendship, exploring the local area and sport & exercise.



Men United

‘You’re very good, thank you very much for every days, for groups, for restaurants, for company, thank you very much Khalil, thank you very much.’



HALE have set up a photography group- Mindful Lens, this lead on from Pathways to Wellbeing, with an attendee with an interest in photography suggesting a photography group and now volunteering to support Mindful Lens. In Year 3 we hope this group can move to be entirely volunteer run. This group uses photography as a way to discuss mental health and see surroundings differently and welcomes regular guests. Guests include photographers specialising in specific techniques and the group has also enjoyed trips to different exhibitions. The group has welcomed members from the Cellar Trust who were initially joined by a support worker and now attend independently. They have been able to showcase their work at health roadshows and photograph different events for HALE. HALE have also set up Wellbeing Wednesday, based on feedback from social prescribers that they were struggling to signpost younger clients to groups. This group enjoys trips, cooking and craft, with group members picking an activity for the following session.



Mindful Lens display at Mental Health Support Showcase

100% of Mindful Lens attendees agree that ‘Since receiving support, I feel more connected to people, services and community activities (including family and friends)’

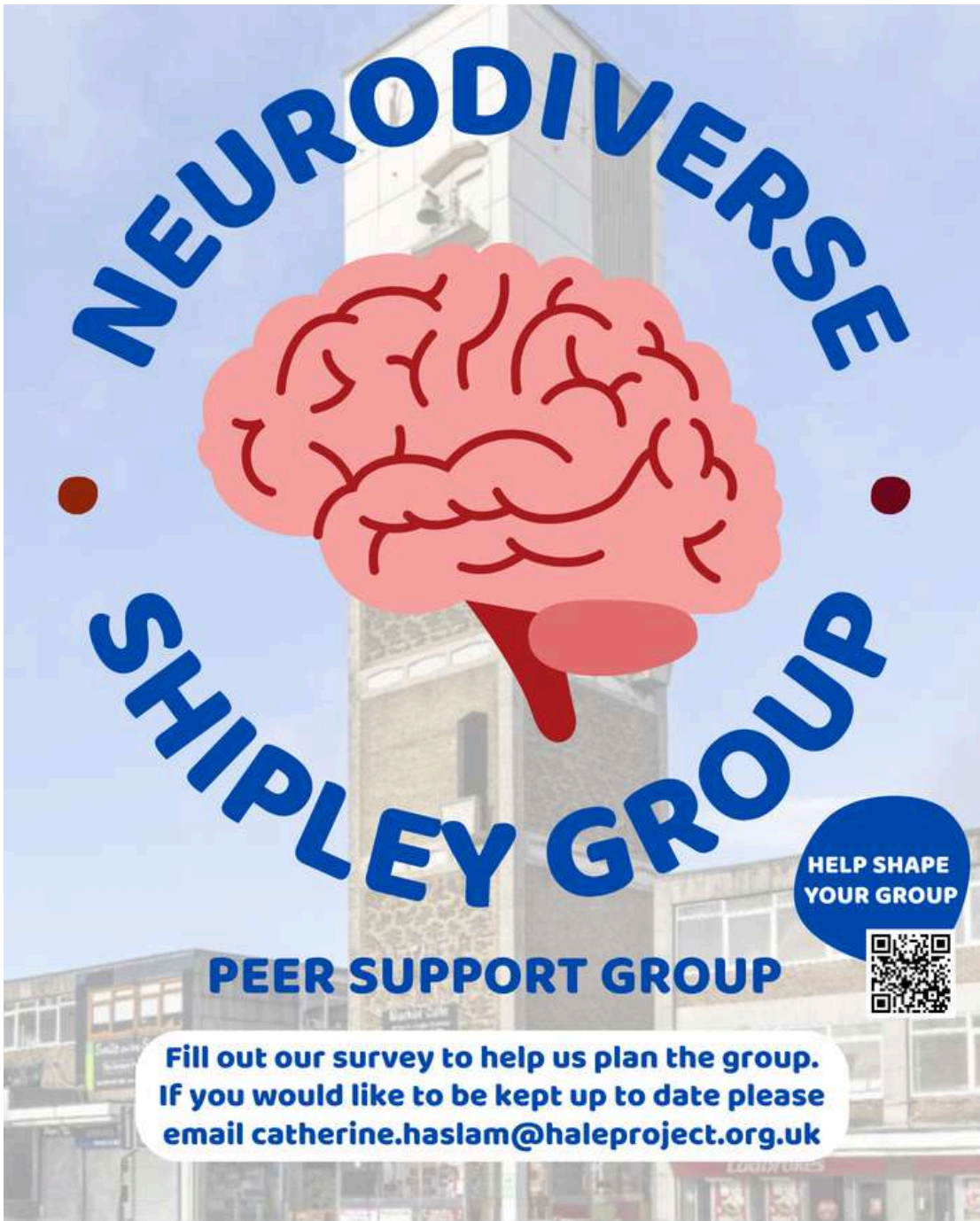
Set up new groups: 10
Class/ session attendees: 119
Regular Classes/ sessions offered: 105

We continue to also run many of the groups set up in Year 1 with groups members benefitting from signposting, these are not included in the above figures.

Average number of attendees at existing weekly groups supported by Connect Workers,

Friday Friends (Men): 6-13
Craft & Connect: 11
Mindful Movement: 13
Stroke Group: 30
Timeless Tuesdays: 30

Alex initially joined HALE through Friday Friends. Whilst getting to know the Connect Worker he expressed an interest in setting up a neurodiverse peer support group. This is something he would have personally benefitted from. He has registered as a volunteer and completed volunteer training. He is currently gathering survey responses about the structure of the new group. We hope to set this group up in the autumn, Alex will facilitate with support from a Connect Worker as required.



Bitesize sessions

We have incorporated a number of bitesize sessions into existing groups. This has included 6 weeks of healthy living sessions delivered by Happy Healthy You at the Community Works women’s group. Friday Friends at HALE have also received a 6 week stress buster course from Talking Therapies. Healthier Horizons included bitesize sessions from Cellar Trust and a home cooking session during Ramadan. We have also run sessions such as scam awareness, forest bathing and music sessions. Alongside a new Try the Trains group at Café West, staff at HALE & Community Works were able to partner with Try the Trains for several sessions with Friday Friends & Women’s group. The groups enjoyed trips around Yorkshire and were able to gain travel and independence skills. Café West have partnered with a podiatrist to offer foot care to residents, initially the podiatrist offered regular treatments within Café West, an easily accessible venue for residents. Many residents were not able to afford the required treatment on a regular basis so we have worked with the podiatrist to offer a number of funded places. This offer has encouraged new people to access the centre.

Bitesize sessions offered: 40
Number of attendees: 136

‘Thanks for what you did today, I had a really good time. Also, I’m very grateful for what you do for us on Fridays, I just thought I’d let you know.’



Forest Bathing with Friday Friends



Cellar Trust Stress Buster course with Friday Friends

Bitesize sessions

- Happy Healthy You (6 weeks)
- Talking Therapies (6 weeks)
- Cellar Trust (Healthier Horizons)
- Cooking session (Healthier Horizons)
- Scam Awareness (2 sessions)
- Forest Bathing
- Music session
- Try the Trains (HALE & Community Works (6 weeks)
- Podiatry (4 sessions)
- Locala drop in (2 sessions)
- Bradford College Drop in
- Covid & flu self care
- Financial awareness
- Mind- male suicide
- Drama workshop with Commonwealth theatre
- Falls prevention

Plans for Year 3

- A trip to the Yorkshire Dales, kintsugi, pottery and music sessions are booked for different groups.
- New bereavement groups at HALE and Cafe West.
- Neurodiverse group
- Book club
- Walking the pathways to wellbeing
- Shipley health roadshow and winter health event
- Grand central project including guided walks and a wellbeing garden at Cafe West.

Volunteers

We have been recruiting new volunteers to support with a range of roles, alongside working with existing volunteers. The Healthier Horizons programme at Café West recruited Vitality Volunteers to assist with the project. Volunteers support with a range of groups, some of which are volunteer led. A Café West volunteer also drives the minibus, supporting all partners with trips.

HALE are working with volunteers to support Friday Friends and Mindful Lens. The Mindful Lens volunteers take an active role in planning and facilitating sessions. At Community Works we have run volunteer training sessions on online safety, First Aid and offered an accredited food hygiene course. HALE volunteers have also benefitted from accredited First Aid and Mental Health First Aid courses. We brought together staff and volunteers from across the partnership for group facilitation training, we hope this will assist with moving more groups to volunteer led in year 3.

Volunteers from across Community Works, including the food bank and job club have benefitted from training sessions. Training has been tailored around topics identified by volunteers, many who are hoping to find employment.

Alongside their regular roles, volunteers have been vital at our health roadshows. At Community Works events volunteers have supported with sign in, refreshments and serving food. HALE events in Shipley have benefited from the support of placement students who have supported with BMI checks.

Volunteers or peer mentors trained: 30
Volunteer training sessions: 10

Volunteer training

- Online safety and defibrillator use
- First Aid
- Food hygiene (accredited)
- First Aid (accredited)
- Mental Health First Aid (accredited)
- Group facilitation
- Route to Success - to support driving of minibus
- Individual training, including Learning Disabilities, Autism & Dementia Learning Disability Awareness.

“The facilitation day was absolutely excellent. From getting there , the warm reception, the relaxed atmosphere was a great start to the training. The teaching techniques were at a level and speed that made the experience enjoyable and very informative. I thoroughly enjoyed the the whole training. So thank you to all involved”



Staff, volunteers & attendees at health roadshow



Group facilitation training



Additional funding

We have secured a number of additional grants to support the work of Uniting Communities.

- WISHH- Health events in Shipley Community Centres (HALE)
- ABCD- Healthier Horizons (Café West)
- ABCD- Men's groups and health events (Community Works)
- Walking the pathways to wellbeing (All) - to be delivered in Year 3
- SENDIVERSE (Café West)
- Grand Central Fund- Guided walks and a wellbeing garden (Café West) - to be delivered in Year 3

Challenges

We have had some challenges in our Men United group. Our first session had 10 attendees, all who spoke different languages. Many initial members of the group were refugees or asylum seekers. This is a good representation of Community Works' local population but has produced challenges for the group leader. As attendance dropped off we worked to find ways to include everyone in activities, focussing on making simple meals so instructions could be easily translated. The group have enjoyed sharing food together, trying different cuisines. Over the autumn their focus will be on continuing to explore the local area and trying different sports activities. Group membership changes regularly as individuals are rehoused across the country. The group currently consists of mainly men born in the UK, many who found out about the group from the men's health event.

The Café West bingo group was set up based on residents feedback however initial sessions were poorly attended due to another local centre offering bingo at a similar time. The coffee morning group has also not had any uptake with feedback being that it is too early. We have listened to this feedback will be changing the time of these sessions from September.

9 Community Works volunteers enjoyed a summer trip to Harewood house together. This was supported by the volunteer minibuss driver from Cafe West.



External Evaluation

We have appointed Claire Wellesley-Smith to conduct an external evaluation of the Uniting Communities project. She is meeting with Connect Workers and attending groups and events. We look forward to hearing her initial feedback on ways we can expand the project.

Conclusion

The Uniting Communities project continues to go from strength to strength. Now we have a well established team we can look at more innovative ways to engage with the community and set up new activities in the community centres. The community centres continue to engage with their local communities in different ways, based on their local knowledge. This results in the project focus varying between centres, with doorknocking a important part of the project at Community Works, whilst HALE have spent more time planning events in collaboration with other local centres. Through continuing to work in partnership we hope to share examples of effective work, and replicate these, where appropriate. This is something we have been able to effectively do in year 2, with sessions such as Try the Trains being offered across partners. All partners are also benefitting from each others assets, with an arrangement in place for the Cafe West minibus to be used by other partners for trips and bus design updated to reflect the partnership. As we move into year 3 we plan to focus on transitioning more groups to be volunteer led, and working with other local venues to spread our reach.

Women’s Health Event

21st April 2026, 10- 1

A Women’s Health Event was organised at Community Works, with organisations advertising the support they can offer residents.

- Living Well
- Hepatitis C trust
- Liver Awareness team
- Epic Restart
- Inspired Neighbourhoods
- Yoga
- Maggies
- Penine breast screening
- Happy Healthy You
- DWP
- Born in Bradford
- Wardens- BP checks
- Locala
- Family Hub
- Equality Together (Carers Outreach Project)
- Social Prescribers (BD3 area)



The Uniting Communities team had a stall providing information about what’s on at Community Works, plus information about Warm Homes Healthy People and Atrial Fibrillation checks. The event also provided an opportunity for a new Community Works project worker to promote a gardening project, with attendees able to plant herbs to take home. We offered hand massages for £1 and Better Place provided children’s activities.

The event was supported by 3 volunteers from Community Works. These volunteers assisted with sign ins and serving lunch and refreshments. This allowed staff to focus on engaging with attendees.

83 women attended on the day. The event was promoted by local door knocking, texts from GP practices, social media and promotion through attending organisations. As some women who had been attending classes at Community Works entered through a side door we anticipate several attendees were not signed in.

Ethnicity		Age	
White English: 5		18-24: 5	
Pakistani: 41		25- 34: 11	
Indian: 4		35-44: 25	
Bangladeshi: 7		45-54: 14	
Other Asian background: 2		55-64: 6	
Black African: 5		65+: 5	
Black Caribbean: 2		Not disclosed 17	
Eastern European: 2			
Not disclosed: 15			

Of those who provided a postcode, 87% were from IMD 1-2, 98% were from IMD 1-4.

At least 235 conversations were had with local women. 35 people were tested for Hepatitis C, all were negative. 2 atrial fibrillation checks were carried out, all were negative.

Health Roadshow

14th July, 10-1, Bolton Woods Community Centre

HALE and Bolton Woods Community Centre worked in partnership to organise a health roadshow. The following organisations were represented:

- HALE – BMI & AF checks
- Carers Resource
- Hep C trust
- Liver awareness team (liver van- liver health checks)
- Wardens – Smoothie bike & blood pressure checks
- Locala
- Food savers
- Penine breast screening
- Khidmat Centre/ dementia hub
- Green Doctor
- Safe & well (equality together)
- Living Well
- Bradford Lions- Diabetes Awareness
- Genes & Health
- DWP- Disability Employment Adviser

‘It was really helpful. I had Hepatitis C and liver checks which I’d never thought about. The lovely lady (Penine breast screening) told me about social care so I’m going to try and get support for my PDA.’



40 people attended on the day. HALE staff and local wardens promoted the events by door knocking on 200 local homes. Wardens took part in a day of action locally the previous week and were able to promote the event again. Bolton Woods promoted the event to their existing users. The event was also promoted via social media by HALE & Bolton Woods. Texts were sent via the GP inviting patients from Windhill, Saltaire & Cottingley medical practises to attend the event, this was very effective with many attendees saying they received a text message.

Of those who provided a postcode, 43% were from IMD 1-2. 17% were from a BD2 postcode, 39% BD18 and 21% BD17. Most people chose not to provide ethnicity, age and gender details. From observations, the majority were white British, with a fairly even split male and female. Most attendees were over 60, with some families who brought children too.

At least 189 conversations were had with local residents, with 9 people referred into services. 17 people were tested for Hepatitis C, 1 was positive for the antibody, so followed up with another test. 20 people were tested on the liver bus.

24 atrial fibrillation checks were carried out, 22 were negative and 2 positive. 30 BMI checks- 1 underweight, 7 normal weight, 12 overweight and 7 obese. 1 person checked only their weight and 2 just their height.

The texts from the GP worked well and encouraged attendance, we also recognised people from doorknocking the week before. People who had received a text were confused about what the event was, this could be clarified in the message. Many people who attended had never been to Bolton Woods Community Centre before and intended to come back. Due to the weather we had 2 entrances- this encouraged attendance from people walking past, but meant it was not always possible to get everyone to sign in. Signs outside the building on the day would have helped increase attendance. In hindsight we could have had the sign in table at the other door. By the time lunch was served many attendees who arrived around 10am had left, this meant food was primarily for stall holders. In the future we could offer brunch or snacks all morning, allowing attendees to also enjoy this. Not all stalls signed up which meant it was difficult to plan stall placement, in hindsight having Living Well next to the BMI checks would have allowed for more direct signposting.

Sendiverse Festival Evaluation Report- Messy Magic- -The Enchanted Nest, at Café West, Sensory Room Launch, and information Event.

Summary of Family Feedback

Families shared overwhelmingly positive feedback about the event. Many highlighted how welcoming and inclusive it felt, appreciating the safe and supportive space where their children could explore freely without feeling different or burdensome. Parents expressed that they felt just as included and supported as their children.

The sensory room and messy play sessions were particularly well received, offering enjoyable and accessible experiences for all.

In addition, we invited a wide range of SEN-focused organisations, ensuring families could access valuable information, advice, and resources from across the district. This not only benefited attendees directly but also created important networking opportunities for us to strengthen connections and gather relevant information to further support our community. The success of the event highlights the importance of creating inclusive, informative, and community-driven opportunities where families feel both welcomed and empowered.

Written Quotes from Children/Young People

(1–2 sentences each, based on observed feedback and participant comments)

“I liked the messy play the best — it was so much fun and I got to make a big colourful mess!”

“The sensory room was my favourite. It felt calm and safe.”

“I made new friends and we all played together — I didn’t want it to end!”

(From observation): One non-verbal child’s eyes lit up as he entered the sensory room, expressing his excitement through joyful sounds and smiles — a powerful moment that showed genuine enjoyment and inclusion.

Case Study- Yaz

One of the standout contributors to the SENDIVERSE event was Yaz, a dedicated local person, and volunteer whose involvement has enhanced community delivery.

Yaz played a central role in the SENDIVERSE event preparation, helping with her lived in experiences and knowledge, contacting sen focused organisations, activity setup, organisation of materials, and ensuring the messy play areas were fully equipped and accessible. Her calm and friendly presence on the day helped families feel welcomed, supported, and comfortable engaging with staff and activities.

Motivated by her experiences volunteering at Cafe West, Yaz has recently enrolled on various online accredited courses, focused on community engagement, inclusive practice, supporting individuals and their families with SEND needs. Her motivation comes from wanting to ensure that everyone, particularly those parents/Carers of children with SEND needs, have access to a safe, supportive environment where they can be themselves

Yaz’s contribution reflects the best of community led support. Her empathy and reliability have strengthened the SENDIVERSE Event and she has made a tangible difference to families who attended the event. She continues to volunteer weekly and is becoming a trusted point of contact for many service users.

This case study highlights the value of nurturing capable local volunteers who bring lived experience knowledge and passion for helping others in to this community.



Case Studies

Names have been changed

Tom

Tom was referred to Pathways to Wellbeing by his HALE social prescriber. This 10 week course encouraged participants to improve their confidence and self-esteem, learn new skills, and increase social interaction through conversation, creative activity and storytelling. During this course we learnt that Tom is a keen photographer and he expressed an interest in setting up a photography group. Tom worked alongside the Connect Worker to set up a HALE photography group, Mindful Lens. This group continues to grow with attendees using photography as a way to support their wellbeing and mental health. Tom registered as a HALE volunteer and is involved in planning and leading sessions. Tom has accessed volunteer training through HALE and recently attended an accredited First Aid course. We continue to work with Tom to support him to engage with Mindful Lens whilst also looking after his own mental health.

Fathima

Fathima is a Asylum Seeker who we connected with through our outreach. She was told about the services offered at Community Works. Fathima is Sri Lankan, she is married and has 2 kids, she wanted to learn English. Fathima and her family started by joining the New Start group and ESOL classes, since then she has been attending classes at Community Works for nearly a year. Over the months Fathima has not only attended ESOL but a lot of other groups which include women's group, carers group, New start group, food market, she also has been volunteering with us for over 6 months in the food market. She is a very hard working and reliable individual. She has progressed rapidly since she has joined Community Works. She is now doing an IT course at Bradford college her English is very good, her confidence in speaking English has bloomed. She is a great example for all other Asylum seekers.

Hope & Ade

Hope is currently expecting a baby and has existing health conditions which have caused complications during previous pregnancies. Through ongoing conversations, the Connect Worker has been able to signpost her to relevant health services and organisations that can provide practical support.

During these conversations, Hope opened up about some of the challenges her husband Ade had been experiencing. At the time, he was experiencing difficulties within his workplace, which Hope recognised had begun to impact his mental wellbeing. She explained that he had been struggling with sleep, concentration, and was becoming increasingly withdrawn.

The Connect Worker met with Hope & Ade and shared information about the Healthier Horizons project and the wellbeing sessions available at Café West. Ade was open about the barriers he felt around attending structured mental health sessions, particularly concerns about stigma and the fear of being judged as a man seeking support. While he acknowledged that the sessions delivered in partnership with The Cellar Trust could have been beneficial, we discussed whether a different route to support might feel more comfortable at this stage. As a result, he was signposted to Talking Therapies, where he is now attending weekly sessions. Ade has since expressed that having access to this support has been a positive step forward for him. Ade also shared that when he feels more confident and further along in his wellbeing journey, he would be interested in supporting the development of a men's group at Café West. He feels that creating a space where men can speak openly with others experiencing similar challenges could help reduce stigma and encourage more men to seek support earlier.

Jean

Jean, a 78 year old local resident, first contacted Cafe West to ask whether they could accept a donation of tinned food items that she no longer needed. When Jean arrived at the centre with several heavy bags the Connect Worker assisted her in bringing them inside and invited her to sit down for a cup of tea. During the initial conversation in the café, it became apparent that Jean seemed somewhat overwhelmed by the busy environment. To ensure she felt comfortable, they moved to a quieter room where they could talk privately. During the conversation, Jean shared that she had recently lost her husband and was finding it difficult to adjust to life on her own. She explained that she rarely went out anymore and had been sorting through belongings and food at home, which had prompted her donation.

The following week, Jean contacted the centre again and asked if she could come in to see the Connect Worker. During this visit, she explained that she was having difficulties with her mobile phone. Although she regularly used it to keep in touch with her son who lives in America, she lacked confidence with technology and had become upset when the phone required a software update. Together, they went through the process step-by-step, allowing Jean to understand what was happening and giving her the confidence to manage similar situations in the future. By the end of the session, she commented that it had been much easier than she had imagined.

Over the following weeks, Jean continued to make regular contact with the centre, sometimes by telephone and sometimes in person. These conversations covered a wide range of topics including travel, music, films, gardening, and family life. Through these regular interactions, Jean gradually became more confident and began to rebuild some of the social connections she had lost following her bereavement. The centre became a place where she felt comfortable, welcomed, and able to seek support without judgement.

Several weeks later, Jean arrived at the centre without arranging a visit beforehand. This time, she arrived with a clear goal. She explained that she had decided she wanted to make positive changes in her life and was determined to become more independent and adventurous again. Her ambition was to visit her son in America, something she had previously felt unable to consider. However, she was unsure how to renew her passport and felt intimidated by the online process. Using the IT facilities at Café West, Jean was supported to navigate the passport renewal process online. Rather than completing the application for her, she was guided through each stage.

By providing consistent support and creating opportunities for conversation, Café West helped reduce social isolation, increase independence, and empower an older resident to take positive steps towards reconnecting with family and regaining confidence in her future.