

Annual Review 2017-2018



 **VAL** Helping people change
their lives for the better



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Our partnership with VAL was aimed at helping us reach groups who would not access our funding due to the unfamiliarity of applying for sport and physical activity grants. VAL provided a vital role in supporting groups through the application process.

IAN PARR, HEAD OF SHARED SERVICE CENTRE, SPORT ENGLAND



Anil Majithia
Chair of VAL
Trustee Board

Welcome

This has been a very challenging year for VAL. We won new sector support contracts in the County and the City, but both contracts had further cuts in value that mean we have had to amend our services and lose experienced staff members through redundancy. We were also shocked and surprised that the European Social Fund and Big Lottery Fund did not award a third Building Better Opportunities programme to the partnership we had led that sought to create employment opportunities for people in rural areas.

At the end of the year, it was very disappointing to lose the Healthwatch Leicestershire contract by a very small margin to an organisation based in Staffordshire. As with most local voluntary organisations we continue to be buffeted by “austerity headwinds.”

Even with these pressures VAL has continued to thrive. We have won a contract in Rutland to deliver information, advice and support to parents and young people with Special Educational Needs. Our staff have provided support to over 600 local organisations and recruited 1,000 new volunteers into community activity.

The two Building Better Opportunities partnerships that we lead are performing excellently, making a substantial difference to people's lives by giving them hope in the future. We have also increased our income from our building and increased the number of people using their personal budgets to buy support from the VALUES project.

VAL continues to help change people's lives for the better through its direct services, through its partnership projects with other local groups, and through supporting community and voluntary action.

Supporting Communities

Part of VAL's core mission is to improve local communities by contributing to a thriving voluntary and community sector (VCS). Our Sector Support team does this by influencing decision makers, recruiting new volunteers and providing opportunities for groups to network, learn and grow.

 **£1.4 million**
of funding raised for groups

 **3,672**
Volunteer enquiries

 **£600,000**
won in a local bid to support a project to prevent violence against women and girls

 **1000**
new volunteers supporting the community in the City and the County

 **635**

Groups supported including 98 rural groups

 **300**

Individuals trained

 **540**

Groups attended VAL events

Violence Against Women and Girls

VAL supported Leicestershire's Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) in their partnership bid to win a slice of a £17m Home Office fund to help prevent and address violence against women and girls.

As a result £600,000 has been awarded from the Violence Against Women and Girls service transformation fund secured by the Office of PCC. The project – supported by the city and county councils, Leicestershire Police, health and other agencies, including charities – aims to help victims by intervening earlier in smarter, more holistic ways. This will include emergency support for victims of domestic abuse and/or sexual violence (within 24 hours), outreach work and specific BME-focused providers.

“ VAL have facilitated the engagement of a large/ diverse range of VCS organisations in what was a very time limited bid. This quick and facilitated access enabled the inclusion of VCS focused elements in our bid to the Home Office which will undoubtedly have strengthened our overall bid.

LEICESTERSHIRE OPCC

Healthwatch Leicestershire

It was a busy year for Healthwatch Leicestershire. We spent the year listening to local people, scrutinising local services and challenging stakeholders, with the aim of improving health and social care services for county residents.

5

We published five insight reports on issues from mental health, maternity and GP Services

90

Our signposting and information service helped 90 individuals

2

We undertook two Enter and View visits to local health and care services



3,453

We reached 3,453 members, subscribers and Twitter followers



We were on the radio 6 times and have conducted 4 TV Interviews

944

We met 944 people through our activities at local community events

Fibromyalgia

Our 'It's not in my head' report was published in June 2017. The report highlighted the experiences of a particularly hidden group of people suffering in silence both locally and nationally.

Following the publication of the report we produced a jointly badged "Top 10 Tips for those living with Fibromyalgia" leaflet, with content provided by the Fibromyalgia Friends Together Group (FFTG). In order to raise awareness of the condition, University Hospitals of Leicester (UHL) agreed to circulate the leaflet to 28,000 people including UHL members and 12,000 professionals.

We also agreed to circulate the leaflet to GP practices across Leicestershire as a tool to help diagnose the condition and for patients to pick up for information.

As of 31 March 2018 VAL is no longer hosting Healthwatch Leicestershire – the new joint City and County Healthwatch will be delivered by Engaging Communities Staffordshire.

“Congratulations on a cracking report... really easy to read and understand.

**CHAIR OF LEICESTERSHIRE
HEALTH AND WELLBEING
BOARD**

Supporting families

SENDIASS Leicester is an impartial information, advice and support service for parents and carers of young people aged 0-25 with special educational needs or disabilities.

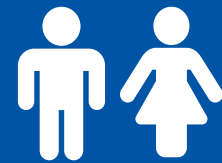
SENDIASS Leicester



709

parents, carers & young people supported

Choice Advice Service



1251

parents supported

Independent Support Service



572

parents, carers and young people supported

Online Service



8,761

website visits

SENDIASS Leicester is now also delivering a SEND-focused co-production and design service, supporting families to feed back about services delivered with Leicestershire Partnership Trust's NHS Healthy Together 0-19 programme.

In January 2018 SENDIASS Leicester was successful in the bid to deliver information, advice and support in Rutland.

SENDIASS Leicester

L is a 16 year-old living in Leicester City with significant needs in the areas of social, emotional and mental health difficulties, communication and interaction, and cognition and learning.

Behaviour had been a long-term concern both at home and at school. The Local Authority refused an initial request for an Education Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment when L was 15. SENDIASS supported L's mum and discussed all available options.

As a result of this support the EHC needs assessment was agreed and SENDIASS helped L to look at her interests and aspirations. L was clear that she wanted to return to full-time education at a College of Further Education. L wanted to attend the Integrated Assessment Meeting (IAM) but asked for support at the meeting. SENDIASS Officer accompanied her and mum to the meeting, supporting her to comment on the Findings of Statutory Assessment and to present her views to the professionals present.

With support from both SENDIASS and Connexions L applied to a local College. She has now started her full-time course with the support outlined in her EHC Plan.



Words cannot express how grateful I am and without your help dedication and support we would not have been able to reach our goal. He is 20 years old now and at University.

SENDIASS LEICESTER SERVICE USER

The GREAT Project

The GREAT (Getting Ready for Employment and Training) Project helps members of families in Leicestershire who are not currently in work or training, to move towards work.

By the end of 2017, 12 people had moved into employment on exiting the project, representing 11% of participants who have signed up. A further 14 had moved into education which represents 13% of sign ups.



12

people into employment



14

people into education



Achievements:



86 participants improved family dynamics after participating in the project



96 participants reported improvements in their ability to cope with life situations.



It has changed my life and made me feel so confident and better in myself in looking for work and training.

GREAT PROJECT PARTICIPANT
- EXITED INTO TRAINING



I had a lot of anxiety - felt very insecure. This has helped me become more focused.

GREAT PROJECT PARTICIPANT
- EXITED INTO JOBSEARCH

Helping families

E is a single parent with a 10-year-old daughter. She has never worked but always did some volunteering. In the past she has experienced some mental health issues but had reached a point where she felt recovered and ready to look for a job. She was, however, under a lot of pressure as she had an upcoming court case regarding custody of her daughter, something she had been dreading for almost a year.

When E first came to the GREAT Project , her dream job was at one of her favourite retail shops. Shortly after E signed up to the project, the shop advertised vacancies.

The GREAT team brought her in quickly for a CV update, and E got an interview. Through her Employment Support Officers and GREAT Project partners, E accessed job-specific interview preparation and telephone and face-to-face support. Ultimately, she got the job.

E is thrilled to be working and feels that she has just gone through a major positive transition in her life.



I really enjoyed my experience with the GREAT Project and after being let down by other government bodies it was really nice to work with people that really cared about my future.

GREAT PROJECT PARTICIPANT - EXITED INTO WORK



Youth Employability Support (YES)

The YES Project supports young people aged 15-24 years old to take steps towards employment.

Its purpose is to help local young people to overcome challenges and barriers that have prevented them from finding a job or seeking further education.

These barriers could include issues such as:

- Low self-esteem and confidence
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse
- Leaving care or in care
- Homelessness
- Previous offenders

The project team is made up of nine youth organisations and charities from across Leicester and Leicestershire. Working together as the YES Project means they can offer a range of courses, and support services tailored to individual needs.



Achievements:

 **250** overall project participants

 **38** participants went into education

 **58** participants went into employment

“ YES Team gave me a purpose to get out the house. I’ve got my confidence back and I’m more sociable. I’d like a career in youth work.

DEMETRIUS, AGE 21
YES PROJECT PARTICIPANT

Lee’s Story

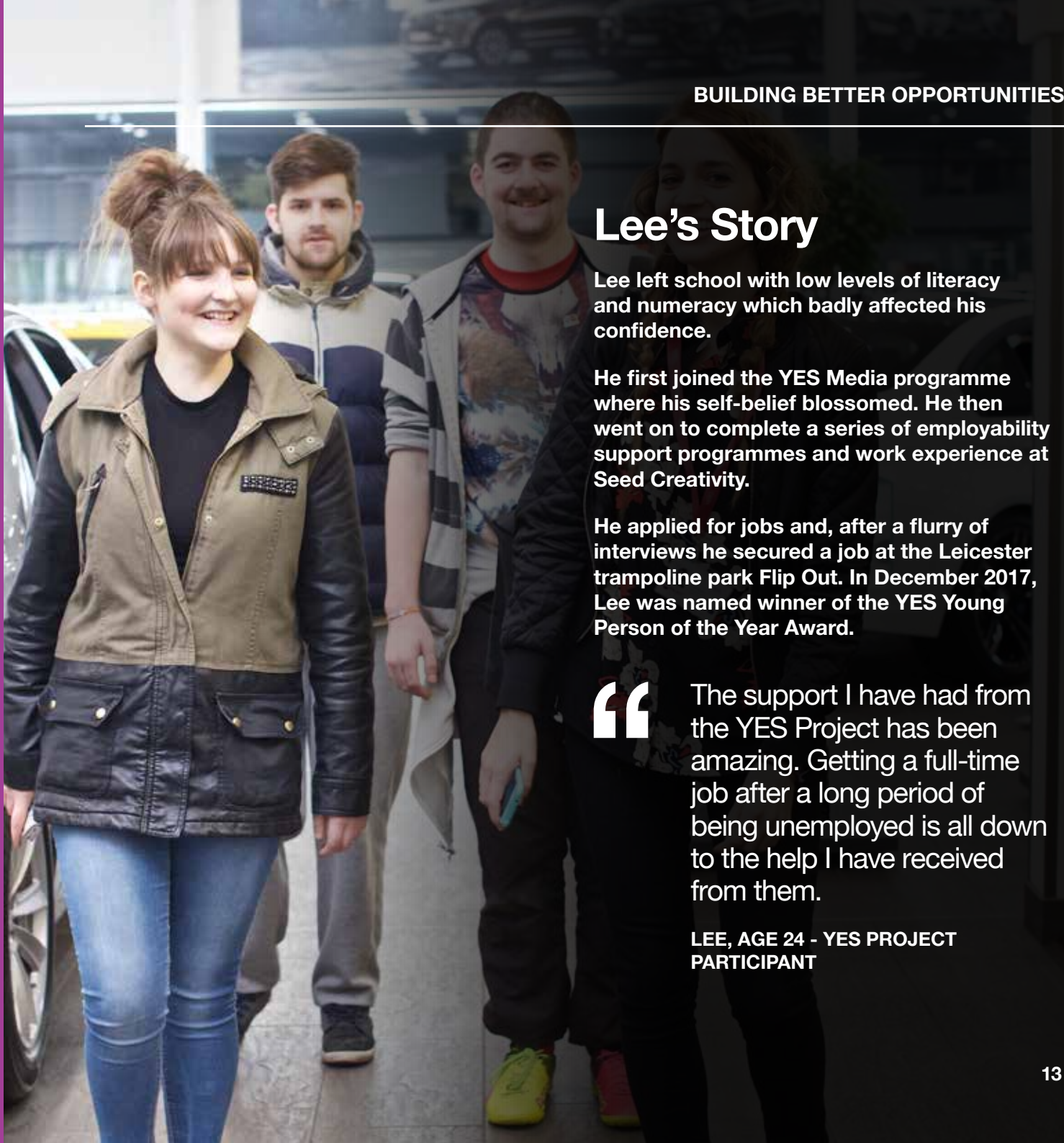
Lee left school with low levels of literacy and numeracy which badly affected his confidence.

He first joined the YES Media programme where his self-belief blossomed. He then went on to complete a series of employability support programmes and work experience at Seed Creativity.

He applied for jobs and, after a flurry of interviews he secured a job at the Leicester trampoline park Flip Out. In December 2017, Lee was named winner of the YES Young Person of the Year Award.

“ The support I have had from the YES Project has been amazing. Getting a full-time job after a long period of being unemployed is all down to the help I have received from them.

LEE, AGE 24 - YES PROJECT PARTICIPANT



VALUES Support

Since 1998, VALUES has provided opportunities for people with learning disabilities to make friends and have fun.

VALUES Holiday

This year 12 VALUES clients had an action-packed holiday in the Lake District with the Calvert Trust. Some of the clients had never been away from their family before so were keen to unpack and take ownership of their beds and drawers. Matt, who had never been away without his mum said, "This place is great, can we stay here forever."

On the first evening the group did fun team-building games in the sports hall on site and then headed out into the night for some orienteering in the dark. They were taught how to read maps and work together to find clues that were hidden round the site. The next day, they split into two groups. One group went cycling on three-wheeled accessible bikes and the other went for a lakeside hike. Tofiq said, "I'm definitely going to try and learn to ride a bike now."

On Sunday morning it was time to get out onto the water into some canoes. This was a new way to travel for everyone and was made even more exciting when they played water football and sped across the water in hotly contested races. Safely back on land and without anyone getting too wet, the groups then split into two again for more cycling and archery.

By Sunday evening the group was back on the bus home, still singing and laughing all the way. Even at 10 o'clock at night everyone was still in great spirits, having tried activities they'd never experienced before.


Achievements


 **280** hours of support a week


 **130** clients on the project


 This has been the best weekend of my life.
TOM - VALUES CLIENT


 Through VALUES I've gained volunteering, work experience and now I'm applying for jobs.
MARK - VALUES CLIENT




 I enjoyed learning at VALUES. I like learning to read and tell the time.
PREETY



 I like this place (VALUES), I feel brilliant about my art.
LEE



 I like VALUES, especially since doing the volunteer work. It's made me feel more important.
KYLE



 I'm more confident and independent.
RABIYA

Room and Office Rental

VAL offers flexible and affordable meeting rooms and office space in Leicester. All profits from bookings go towards supporting social good in the community into projects we have based at VAL, which include recruiting volunteers, supporting VCS groups and organisations, and providing essential services in local communities.

“ VAL is an ideal venue which we would definitely use again. There is a good atmosphere with varied groups using it all week and everyone seemed to get along and not get in each other's way. Lunches were good value for money. We can't wait to come back!

PAM HOLTOM
- NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
PARENTS AS FIRST TEACHERS UK

Achievements:



17

tenants in the building



945

conference bookings



As an established tenant we have always found the VAL Team, friendly, helpful and supportive, always willing to adapt to our varied business needs.

VAL TENANT

Rooms that make a difference

Flexible and fully accessible conference and meeting rooms to hire, all finished to a high standard with IT equipment included.

Our on-site catering and dedicated staff will be on hand throughout the day to ensure that your event runs smoothly.



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Kevan Liles
Chief Executive

Looking to the future

Last year I mentioned the ‘looming’ UK exit from the European Union – it seems that this year our departure is further away and there is the possibility of some extension to our European projects. On the other hand, the continuing uncertainty about future arrangements means the UK economy continues to splutter and as a result public services are still on a very tight financial rein. As you can see this has been a year of further uncertainty during which we have had to take some tough budget decisions as income for our contracts has dropped.

It is very difficult to plan ahead in the current climate but what we can do is to continue to deliver innovation and excellence, make the strongest case for continued investment in local voluntary action, and improve our connections to the community and to commissioners of services. Our top priorities this year will be to:

- Re-imagine our delivery of support to local communities and groups in the light of reduced budgets and changing needs
- Secure the contract to continue to provide the Leicester City SENDIASS service – and seek to extend our excellent support to other areas
- Exceed our targets in the Building Better Opportunities projects (YES and GREAT projects), secure positive outcomes for our users and successfully make the case for continued funding for our partnerships

I have to close by mentioning a few of our wonderful staff members. Very sadly Dave Woolman, who had led our IT Department, died just before Christmas. Not only did Dave contribute a huge amount to VAL’s recent success but his children also volunteered for VAL for periods, gaining confidence and experience to further their careers. We were honoured to host a celebration of Dave’s life for his family and friends after the funeral.

In addition, two of our long serving senior managers resigned their posts at VAL this year. Wendy Brickett left her role as Executive Manager for Children and Young People’s services and Simon Jenner has recently resigned as Executive Manager for Infrastructure Support. VAL wishes them both every success in the future.



“

A useful day-good balance of speakers and networking. Future Focus just gets better each year, I really enjoy attending.

FUTURE FOCUS DELEGATE - 2017

VAL Helping people change their lives for the better

With thanks to our funders

Big Lottery Fund
Council for Disabled Children
Department for Work and Pensions
East Leicestershire and Rutland CCG
European Union
Leicester City CCG
Leicester City Council
Leicester Safeguarding Children Board
Leicester-Shire and Rutland Sport
Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Board
Leicestershire County Council
Sport England
West Leicestershire CCG

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Voluntary Action LeicesterShire is the trading name of Voluntary Action Leicester. Voluntary Action Leicester is a registered charity (No. 509300) Company Limited by Guarantee (No. 1356513) Registered in England and Wales

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