

Annual Review 2018-2019



VAL

Helping people change their lives for the better



Anil Majithia
Chair of VAL
Trustee Board

Welcome

I am delighted to present what will be my final annual review for Voluntary Action LeicesterShire (VAL). It has been a real privilege to have chaired this wonderful organisation for the last four years. During that period we have made significant improvements in governance and trustee engagement, as well as future sustainability.

VAL's fundamental aim is to change people's lives for the better, which we do directly and with the support of partners. Following a difficult year in 2017/18, it gives me great pleasure to be able to report much improved financial and operational performance for 2018/19. Some of this year's key achievements include:

- The continuing success of our employability projects, YES and GREAT, which have helped over 170 people into employment
- Continued growth for VALUES, our service for people with learning disabilities
- The work of SENDIASS being highlighted as excellent by OFSTED
- Supporting 612 voluntary groups and facilitating £3.3m in funding for 37 of them through our Voluntary Sector Support service

As you will see, it has been an extremely successful year and I would like to thank my fellow Trustees, VAL's amazing volunteers and our dedicated staff team for all their efforts.

VAL's Economic Impact

This year we produced an Economic Impact report for the 2018 calendar year. Here are the highlights:



177 supported into employment through YES & GREAT



You can download a copy of our 2018 Impact Report through our website at valonline.org.uk/our-impact. If you would like a printed copy, please get in touch.

GREAT Project

The Getting Ready for Employment and Training (GREAT) Project is a partnership that helps unemployed members of families in Leicester and Leicestershire move towards work or training. Individuals are given support to overcome their barriers to work through a variety of workshops.

ACHIEVEMENTS THIS YEAR:



303 project participants



51 into employment



44 into further training or job search

“ The project gave me the confidence I needed and I don't feel lost anymore. I'm leaving the project doing what I've always wanted to do.

- GREAT PROJECT PARTICIPANT



Case Study: Eda, GREAT Project Participant

Eda came to the UK a little over three years ago from her native country, Turkey. Between living in Turkey and Dubai, Eda had acquired the skills she needed for her career but was unsure how to transfer those skills in the UK. She knew she wanted to find work supporting refugees, but didn't know where to begin.

Eda heard about the GREAT Project and decided to self-refer. She met with her Employment Support Officer to discuss the barriers she faced so they could work together to overcome them. Eda ultimately wanted to improve her English, learn about the opportunities available in the UK and integrate more into British society.

Whilst on the project, Eda received support from delivery partners, and visited local businesses on 'behind the scenes' tours. She accessed support to update her CV and cover letter, and learned effective job search skills.

Eda completed a work placement at a world-renowned humanitarian charity, where she is now a permanent volunteer.

“ Before joining the GREAT Project, I didn't leave my house. Now, I have completed my time with the project and it's given me a new lease of life.

- EDA, GREAT PARTICIPANT

“ The project has given me a life and it has given me a purpose. It really is the best thing I ever did.

- GREAT PARTICIPANT

BENEFITS FOR PARTICIPANTS

301

Improved family dynamics

282

Improved ability to cope with life situations

292

Improvement in employability skills

YES Project

The YES Project supports young people aged 15-24 to overcome barriers and challenges that have prevented them from finding a job, entering training or seeking further education.

The service is a partnership of eight organisations working together as the YES Project to offer a range of courses and support services tailored to individual needs.

ACHIEVEMENTS THIS YEAR:



184 project participants



61 participants went into employment



36 participants went into education or training



Case Study: YES Project Participant

Before joining the YES Project, J had nothing to do; he'd play computer games in his room, but he wanted to build confidence so he could reach his goal of obtaining an apprenticeship or job as a mechanic.

The Prince's Trust referred J to the YES Project after he completed their 'Get Started with Robots' programme. He started on the 12 week Team programme at Warwickshire College, pushing himself out of his comfort zone and making new friends, something he'd been keen to do before starting on the YES Project.

The one-to-one support given by his team leader and key worker was invaluable to J, and with their support he attended a traineeship introduction day at Babington College. With what he'd learnt on the YES Project, J had the confidence to sign up on the day.

“ **The YES Project will help you to get where you want to be... I feel proud and my family are proud too. I'm actually doing something that benefits myself.**

- J, YES PROJECT PARTICIPANT

20 Years of VALUES

VALUES provides opportunities for people with learning disabilities in Leicester and Leicestershire to learn new skills and have fun.

In 2018, VALUES celebrated turning 20 with a combined birthday and Christmas party. Staff and clients from the past and present came along for dancing, cake, stories and presentations about 20 years of VALUES.

From a small service helping a handful of clients, VALUES has now grown to deliver hundreds of activities each week for 130 clients, with dozens of full-time, sessional and volunteer staff.

WHAT WE'VE ACHIEVED

 **130** VALUES clients supported in 2018

 **1,070** hours per week of support



What people say about VALUES

“VALUES is the best thing that’s happened to my brother. What you do helps massively to so many people, so mum gets a break. Hats off to you. Thank you to all of you. You provide a safe place for people to make friends.

- RELATIVE OF VALUES CLIENT

“I think the people are nice. I have made new friends. I like the activities and going different places.

- VALUES CLIENT

A creative year

Over the last year VALUES has continued to support people to bring out their artistic side in a wide range of different creative sessions. Along with art, fashion, photography, band and drama they have also started a new clay modelling session which has been a great success.

Out of the 130 people supported over the year, 75 of them have been inspired to take part in these sessions. With more art projects and drama shows on the horizon the creativity will continue to flow at VALUES.

Tara busy making cacti
in clay modelling



Danielle with her
fashion designs

Voluntary Sector Support

VAL supports a vibrant and diverse voluntary and community sector, which is worth an estimated £195m in Gross Value Added (GVA) for Leicester and Leicestershire.

Our Voluntary Sector Support team helps local charities and community groups to get started, find funding and grow. They do this through training, face-to-face support and events like our annual Funding Fairs and Future Focus conference.

As Leicester's Volunteer Centre, VAL also helps get local people into volunteering. Our volunteering website helps organisations and potential volunteers to find each other, and anyone can visit our drop-in sessions to find out more about volunteering.



£3.3 million

in funding for 37 voluntary groups through support



35%

of people who enquired with us about volunteering went on to volunteer

(v.s. national average of 14.1%)



3,157 hours

support for voluntary groups



612

groups supported



400

individuals trained



500

groups attended VAL events

Case Study: The Bridge - Homelessness to Hope

The Bridge – Homelessness to Hope is a Leicester-based charity that has been helping homeless people to turn their lives around since 2009. They provide up to 100 breakfasts for rough sleepers every week and almost 10,000 meals each year for the homeless and vulnerable.

When The Bridge – Homelessness to Hope were looking for new funding, they booked onto VAL's annual Funding Fair and were introduced to the Key Fund, a social investor that provides flexible grant and loan packages to support VCS organisations, social enterprises and charities.

They were able to secure £30,000 in investment which helped them to create Ernie – a mobile coffee wagon converted from a donated milk float which is thought to be the first of its kind in the voluntary sector outside of London. All proceeds from coffee sales help support the specialist services offered by the charity.

“ We wanted to set up a social enterprise to cover our core costs. VAL was pivotal to this vision... They've supported us in setting up a mobile coffee wagon to help raise funds and we've also converted an ice-cream trailer to a second coffee wagon.

- KEITH LAWSON-WEST, TRUSTEE AT THE BRIDGE



Helping parents and carers

SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service) offers free, confidential and impartial information, advice and support to parents and carers of young people aged 0-25 with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) as well as young people themselves.

VAL delivers the SENDIASS Leicester and SENDIASS Rutland services. In the last year the SENDIASS Manager has been the Chair of the East Midlands Information Advice and Support Service group, as well as the East Midlands IASS Staff Association Representative.

VAL also manages the Choice Advice service for Leicester, which provides free and impartial information to parents about the school admissions and application process.

SENDIASS Leicester

 **557** instances of support

 **4** training sessions delivered

SENDIASS Rutland

 **69** parents/carers supported

CHOICE ADVICE LEICESTER'S ACHIEVEMENTS

64
school support
sessions

1,287
parents/carers
supported overall

440
parents/carers
supported one-to-one

“ I have struggled for years to get my daughter an education plan after she was kicked out of high school due to her needs. Now she has a bright future ahead of her with all the support she needs. This has had an amazing impact on her life and future. We can not thank staff enough for their support and understanding.

- SENDIASS LEICESTER SERVICE USER

“ Because of the help from SENDIASS I feel that we are making real progress with regards to creating a better EHC plan for my daughter. Many thanks for all your help.

- SENDIASS RUTLAND SERVICE USER

“ Thanks. I was so worried about attending the appeal on my own, you put me at ease and helped me to understand the information that I needed to share.

- CHOICE ADVICE SERVICE USER

“ Thank you again for your support. You're the first person who has supported me in 16 years.

- SENDIASS LEICESTER SERVICE USER

“ I was very grateful for the existence of SENDIASS and they were the only source of helpful information I've managed to find.

- SENDIASS RUTLAND SERVICE USER





“ Volunteering helped me to find amazing new paths in life. It helped to improve my English language and continue my career in the UK.

- MITZU, VAL FRONT OF HOUSE STAFF

Rooms that make a difference

VAL offers meeting and conference space, as well as office rental, at our building on Newarke Street in Leicester city centre. All of the proceeds from the space that we rent help us continue changing lives in local communities.

If you need affordable and flexible meeting or conference space, get in touch. Your booking will help VAL to continue its mission of changing lives for the better in local communities.

events@valonline.org.uk 0116 258 0666

Case Study: Mitzu, Front of House Staff

In August 2018 Mitzu joined VAL's Voluntary Sector Support team as a volunteer. Having recently moved to Leicester from Peru, English is Mitzu's second language and volunteering was a great way for her to gain some experience in the UK whilst improving her language skills.

In 2019, Mitzu joined VAL's front of house team and she credits her volunteering experience for helping her to find work.



Kevan Liles
Chief Executive

Looking to the future

Does anyone have a spare crystal ball? Looking back at my closing comments for last year's review, I could almost repeat them this year.

The economic and political climate in the UK still does not lend itself to accurately forecasting the future for VAL or anyone else. We have not yet exited the EU and although the government has announced the end of austerity, it does not feel like it 'on the ground'. VAL has had to be very tight on costs to ensure that we are sustainable and prepared for whatever the future holds.

In the face of this continuing uncertainty it would be nice to have some stability in our long-term services – unfortunately not. This coming year, two of our longest-running contracts – City Voluntary Sector Support and SENDIASS Leicester – are potentially both up for tender. We are also hoping to secure our Building Better Opportunities services into early 2022. With all this in mind, our key priorities for the year will be:

- Working with voluntary sector colleagues to develop a 'manifesto' for Civil Society and local voluntary action in the County and City
- Preparing to compete for our City Voluntary Sector Support contract and SENDIASS Leicester
- Extending our Building Better Opportunities projects to continue supporting those furthest from the labour market into work
- Growing our VALUES service – in particular developing a second site at Danbury Gardens
- Working with health services on Social Prescribing and with District Councils on volunteering and support for community groups

Thanks to the hard work of our trustee board, our staff and our volunteers, we have started this year in a better, more sustainable position. Despite the challenges, we are full of hope for the future.

8VAL Helping people change their lives for the better

With thanks to our funders

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

National Lottery Community Fund

Sport England

West Leicestershire CCG

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