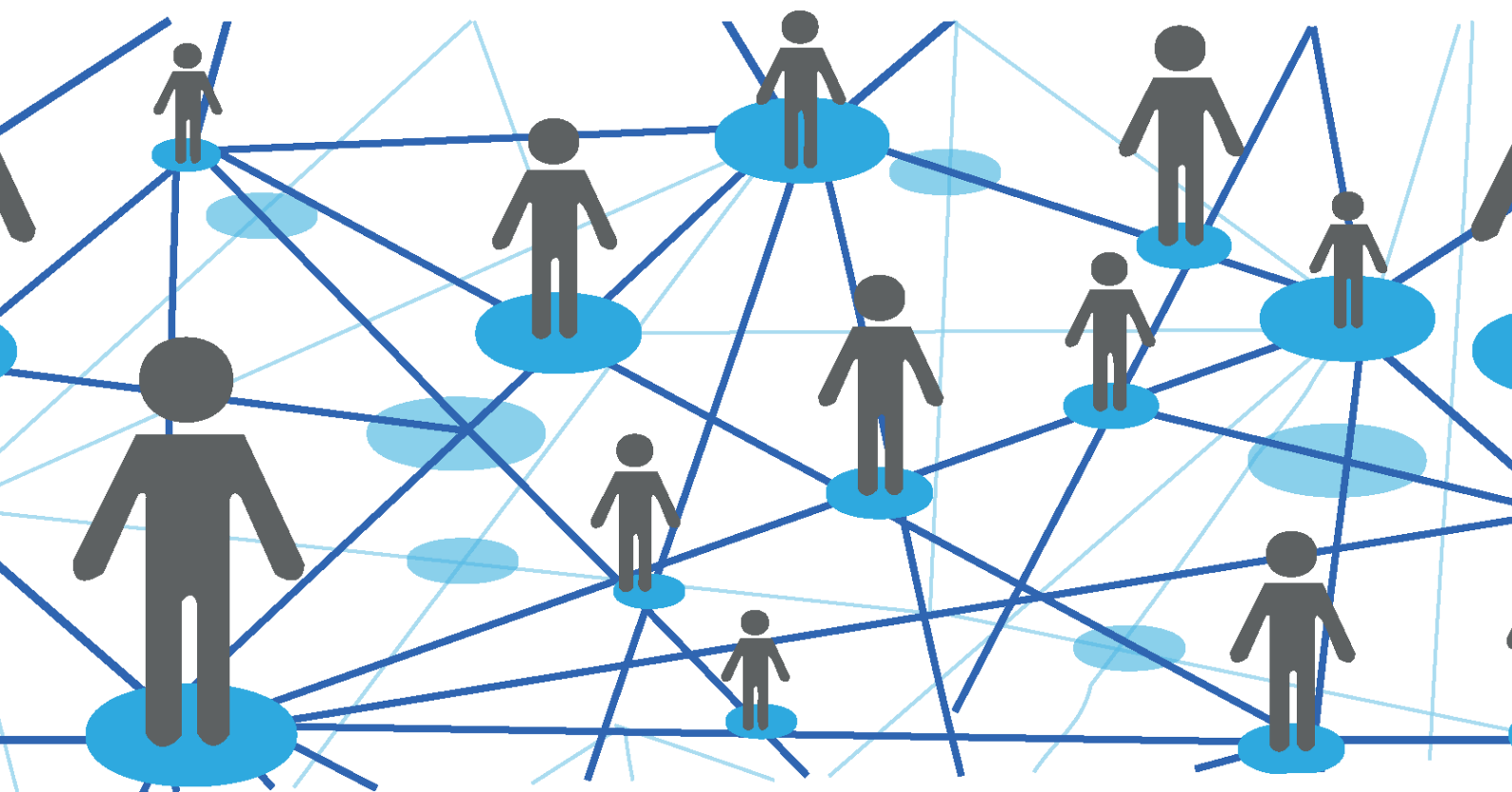


Neighbourhood Mental Health Café

➔ Report

November 2023



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

Voluntary Action Leicester registered charity (No. 509300) Company Limited by Guarantee (No. 1357513) Registered in England and Wales.

→ Background

Voluntary Action Leicestershire (VAL) was commissioned in late 2021 to support the development and roll out of the Neighbourhood Mental Health Café (Formerly Crisis Café) Grant Scheme across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) in light of national guidance and local consultation.


The aim of the Neighbourhood Mental Health Café Scheme was to establish spaces to provide a safe, supportive and collaborative alternative to accessing GP services or Accident & Emergency (A&E) departments for people with issues that may affect their mental health. To ensure that people receive support and interventions in the least restrictive environment consistent with their safety and health and social care needs.


The project presented an opportunity to trial a new way of commissioning the voluntary sector to deliver services, by running a small and accessible grant scheme as opposed to a procurement process which might otherwise have limited the number and size of organisations confident enough to apply.


There were 4 Cafés in existence prior to the launch of the grant scheme and Round 1 saw the establishment of 11 further Cafés.

Following this initial round to establish 11 Cafés, VAL was commissioned to support the development of 10 additional Cafés to bring the total number up to 25 across LLR.

Round 1 Highlights:

 2 Information sessions

 42 Applications submitted across the City, County & Rutland

 11 Cafés across the City and County

→ Project Scope for Round 2

VAL was then contracted to run a second round of grant funding for the Neighbourhood Mental Health Cafés with the aim of securing the final 10 locations. For Round 2, it was important to acknowledge some of the learning from the previous round and look at implementing some of the recommendations and improvements that had been suggested.

| Recommendations made in round 1 report | Changes Implemented |
|--|--|
| Increase application timeframe | Extended by 1 week for Round 2 |
| Encourage Partnerships | This was encouraged further during the final information session. It is noted however that partnership bids take considerably more time and schemes with a quick turnaround are less likely to produce consortia applications. Round 2 saw one partnership application |
| Review technical jargon | VAL worked with LPT and redrafted the briefing document for Round 2, removing some of the more clinical references and terms |

Project Scope for Round 2 continued...


| Recommendations made in round 1 report | Changes Implemented |
|--|--|
| Create Networking opportunities for Providers | There have since been several online and two in person events to facilitate this |
| Investment in Training | The LPT bought in service from to enable several staff members from each provider organisation to attend Decider Skills training for free) |
| Consider Blaby as a specific priority area | Blaby was included as a priority area for Round 2 applications |
| Consider some more rural locations outside of key market towns | Following the review of Public Health data and local intelligence, additional rural locations were highlighted for North West Leicestershire, Charnwood and Hinckley & Bosworth. |
| Strike the balance between larger regionals/nationals and small grassroots organisations | For Round 2, more local VCSE groups were engaged in the information session and wider promotion of the Grant Scheme to encourage more applications. |
| Explore supporting communities of specific interest such as; asylum seekers/refugees/ LGBTQ+community/ | Although this was noted as a valuable area of work, the funding available for the Cafés had a focus on geographical coverage. This will be noted as a future opportunity. |


Priority Locations


| CITY | COUNTY |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Beaumont Leys – (either Stocking Farm, Mowmacre Hill or Home Farm) ■ Eyres Monsell ■ New Parks ■ Saffron ■ Highfields ■ Northfields ■ North Evington & Rowlatts Hill ■ Thurnby Lodge | <p>North West Leicestershire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ashby ■ Measham ■ Greenhill <p>Charnwood county:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mountsorrel ■ Rothley ■ Syston West ■ Syston East ■ Sileby <p>Hinckley + Bosworth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Barwell ■ Earl Shilton <p>Blaby</p> <p>Rutland</p> |

This had less prevalence in Round 2 as the focus shifted from PCN coverage to understanding and meeting local needs and addressing gaps in provision. It was agreed, based on recommendations that the scheme would select villages outside of key market towns as priority locations. In this round for example, we made Syston, Measham and Earl Shilton the priority locations to widen the rural coverage and Café Network. We also looked more closely at Blaby coverage to ensure a presence in each district.

Round 2

 1 Information session

 34 Applications submitted across the City, County & Rutland

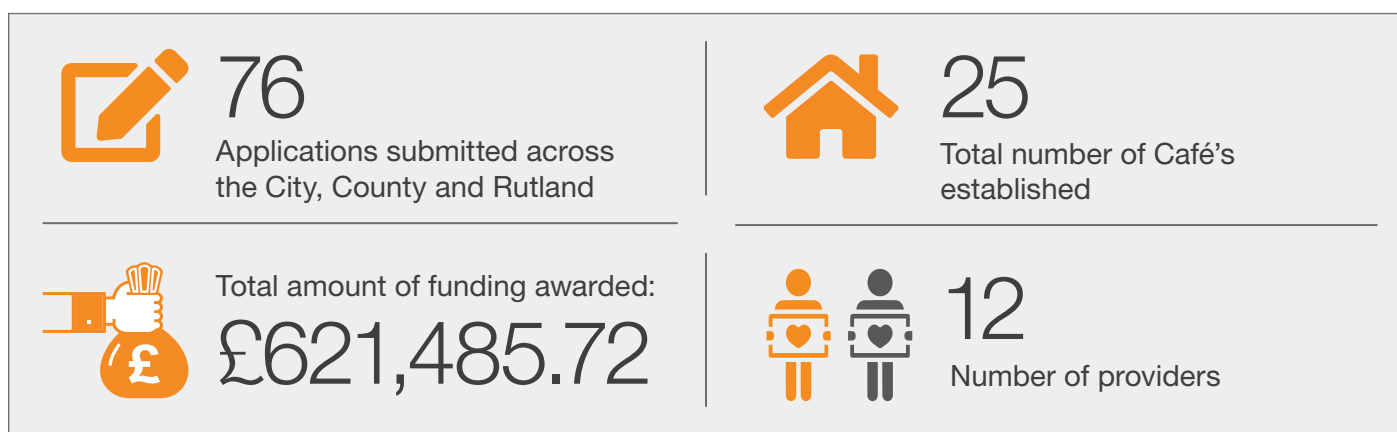
 10 Establishment of a further 10 Cafés across the City and County

Round 2 priority areas were identified and finalised, partly based on districts which did not yet have coverage and partly based on conversations and feedback from partners, providers & VAL. There was a strong emphasis in Round 1 on Primary Care Network (PCN) coverage and ensuring applicants understood which PCN they belonged to.

➔ Round 2 Awards:

| Provider Name | District | Location | Award Amount |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Age UK | North West Leicestershire | Measham | 30,000.00 |
| Beacon Care and Advice CIC | Blaby | Enderby | 30,000.00 |
| Jamila's Legacy | Leicester City | Highfields | 29,923.00 |
| Mental Health Matters | Leicester City | Thurnby Lodge | 29,883.00 |
| Mental Health Matters | Leicester City | Eyres Monsell | 29,986.00 |
| Mental Health Matters | Hinckley & Bosworth | Earl Shilton | 29,986.00 |
| Peppers A Safe Place | Rutland | Oakham | 26,543.00 |
| Rural Community Council | Charnwood | Syston | 29,990.00 |
| Saffron Lane Neighbourhood Council | Leicester City | Saffron | 29,999.72 |
| Team Hub CIC | Leicester City | New Parks | 30,000.00 |

Key Scheme Highlights:



➔ VAL Support

As part of our role in the Grant Process, VAL undertook the design and development of an Application pack, briefing document and appendices to provide an overview of the Primary Care Networks and priority locations. VAL was able to offer a Read and Review service to give feedback on draft applications, which was made available to all applicants.

VAL also carried out pre-panel assessments which involved assessing the legal structures and set ups of the organisations and their eligibility to apply in to the scheme the coordination of the Grant Panel and preparation of award and rejection letters.

Design and delivery of information sessions:

Provision of information about the Grant Scheme, the background and context that lead to its development and how organisations could engage with the programme and ultimately submit an application.

The sessions were attended by some existing providers to give applying organisations an insight into what is involved in delivering a Crisis Café, including the types of people and concerns that commonly present and how frequently further clinical intervention has been required.

VAL Support continued

Staff from VAL, NHS, LPT and the CCGs tried to make clear to applying organisations, that whilst there was a general model for how the Cafés should look, we are also aware that community focused organisations know best how to serve and support their communities.

VAL also worked alongside the Mental Health Neighbourhood Leads and Providers to coordinate and launch the Cafés, representatives from VAL attended the launches.

VAL also acted as a resource of support for Providers, offering advice and guidance around issues such as monitoring, marketing tools and developing relevant policies and procedures that supported the delivery of the Cafés.

For some of the Cafés, VAL supported the development of their relationship with the LPT and with the wider VCSE landscape in their area.

Key changes

- The change of name from Crisis Cafés to the Neighbourhood Mental Health Café Scheme. After much consultation led by the LPT the Cafés were renamed. Formerly Crisis Cafés, the Cafés adopted the new name of Neighbourhood Mental Health Cafés. This addressed the issue that the word 'Crisis' might not resonate with everybody, or might hold different meaning for different people. Some individuals might not always see themselves as 'in crisis' and therefore might not attend when the support could be valuable to them, alternatively, some might see that being in 'crisis' could lead to stigma.
- The Introduction of the Neighbourhood Mental Health Leads across LLR. Shortly after round 2 awards had been made, the LPT introduced the newly formed Neighbourhood Mental Health Lead team who each have a geographical area for which they are responsible. Having the leads offered additional support for the Mental Health Cafés in each area, most of the leads have established smaller networks within their area and offered support with café launches and developing connections within communities.

VAL Evaluation

VAL was asked to complete a short and independent evaluation in to the experience of organisations who secured one or more of the Café locations. VAL spoke to most of the providers, using conversations and anonymous surveys to collate feedback about their experience of supporting an NHS/LPT led initiative.

Some of the comments made in that exercise led to the following recommendations;

Recommendations

- Some proactive NHS led promotion, in particular, support with communicating the service with other NHS services such as GP's. Suggestions include, utilising the NHS text alert service to inform residents in some localities
- Greater clarity for providers around CAP and UCH, the difference between the two and examples of which of the two you would call in different scenarios. Training specifically for CAP and UCH around the support they should be giving to Neighbourhood Café Staff.
- Some additional finance and resource to run specific youth focused sessions at the Cafés, the feeling as that this more informal and less clinical setting would be the ideal format for younger people struggling with their mental health.
- A lot of work is still needed locally to remove the stigma around poor mental health and accessing mental health support services.

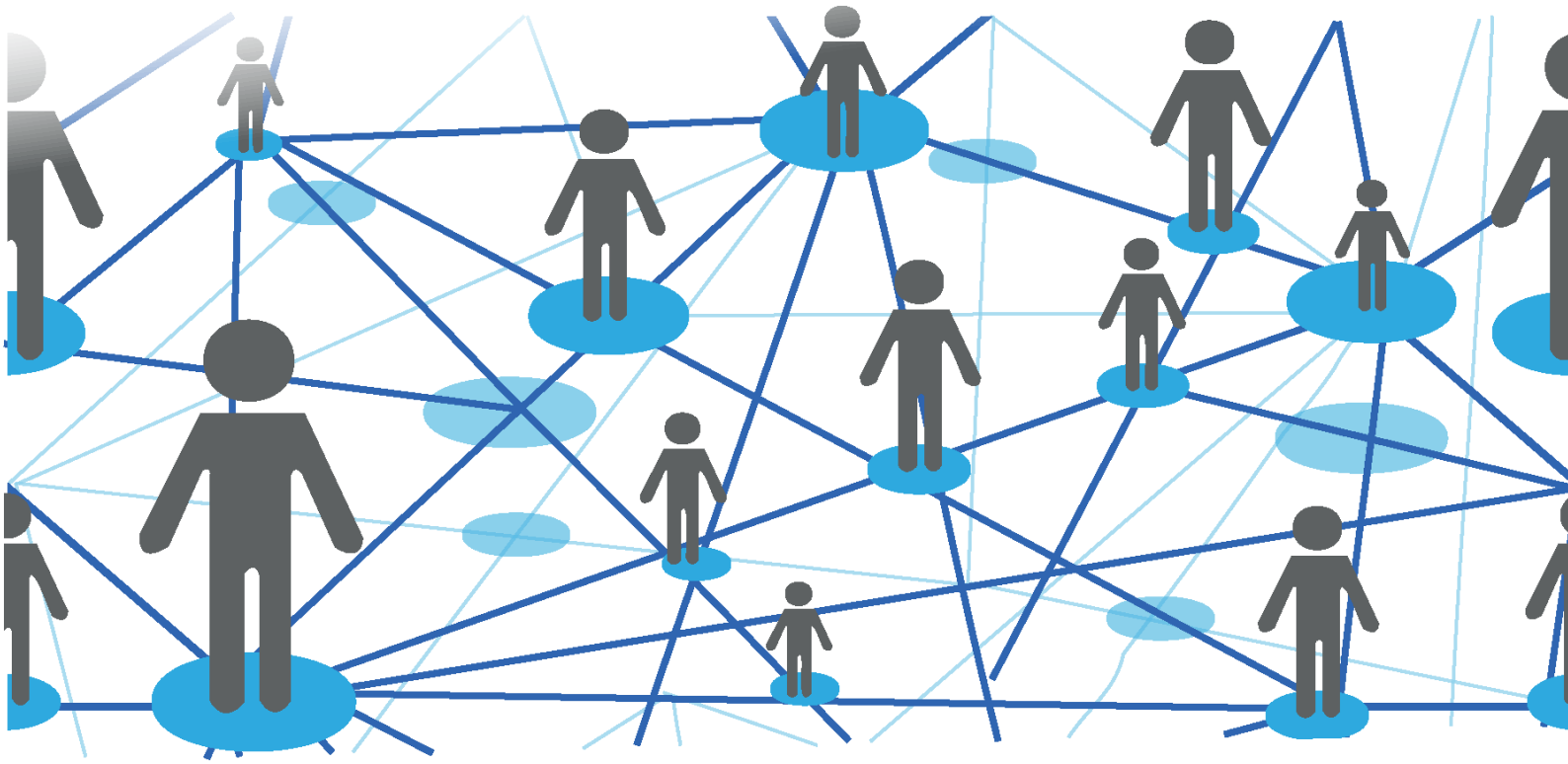
Recommendations continued

- A revisit of what the aims and purpose of the Neighbourhood Mental Health Cafés are, what the whole operation should look like and if this has changed over time. Some reflection like this to ensure consistency moving forwards in particular between the initial 4 commissioned services, round one providers and the round two providers.
- Establish links with other mental health services and wider support offered in local communities to create referral pathways both into, and out of, the Neighbourhood Mental Health Cafés.
- Explore the opportunities for Mental Health Cafés to provide specific support to communities of interest – e.g. LGBTQ+ communities, refugees and asylum seekers, people with physical disabilities.
- Explore the potential to further extend the coverage across LLR – whilst the additional Cafés offer wider coverage, there continue to be gaps in the wider Melton Borough, the rural village of Harborough, the northern parishes of North West Leicestershire.
- Look at aligning the offers of the Neighbourhood Mental Health Cafés with other services like Social Prescribing Link Workers, Local Area Coordinators, First Contact Plus, Community Connectors etc.
- Map data on the issues people are presenting with to understand some of the key trends in each area, to allow support to be further tailored based on needs.
- Map data on where people have travelled from to access the Cafés – most are likely from that neighbourhood, but some will travel to where their closet Café is located. This could inform future work in terms of understanding geographical needs.
- Undertake a regular review of how Cafés are being used – there may be opportunities to consider changing locations if people are struggling to access support?

Opportunities

VAL has identified a number of opportunities to undertake further work to support the Neighbourhood Mental Health Cafés and establish stronger partnerships and collaboration across LLR:

- In order to strengthen the long term viability of the services and to increase the size of its offer, VAL could support Providers in assessing their organisation's capacity and capability to involve volunteers in service delivery.
- Recruitment and management of a pool of volunteers to support the crisis Cafés across LLR
- Establishment of 'Mental Health Champion' Training across LLR to increase engagement
- Organisational development and future planning. VAL can continue to work closely with Providers to ensure that they are running their organisations effectively, exploring various sources of income and offering training and development to their staff.
- Engaging local employers to advocate positive mental health and to connect with services like the Neighbourhood Mental Health Cafés to offer support to employees.
- Connecting with similar support schemes that exist in LLR, such as the Renew Wellbeing Cafés.
- Developing links with neighbouring counties and their Mental Health Cafés offers to ensure local people are well informed on the range of services that are available and where they can access support. For example, someone in Bottesford might seek support in Nottinghamshire, someone in parts of Hinckley & Bosworth could look to Staffordshire or Warwickshire, someone in Castle Donnington to Derbyshire.
- Draw on lessons from other Neighbourhood Mental Health Café Schemes/ Crisis Café Schemes nationally – what is working well, what are the key lessons to take forward.



VAL is working in partnership with the NHS ICB to disseminate these grants to groups across Leicester Leicestershire and Rutland.



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