

Better Together Community Fund Report Year 2



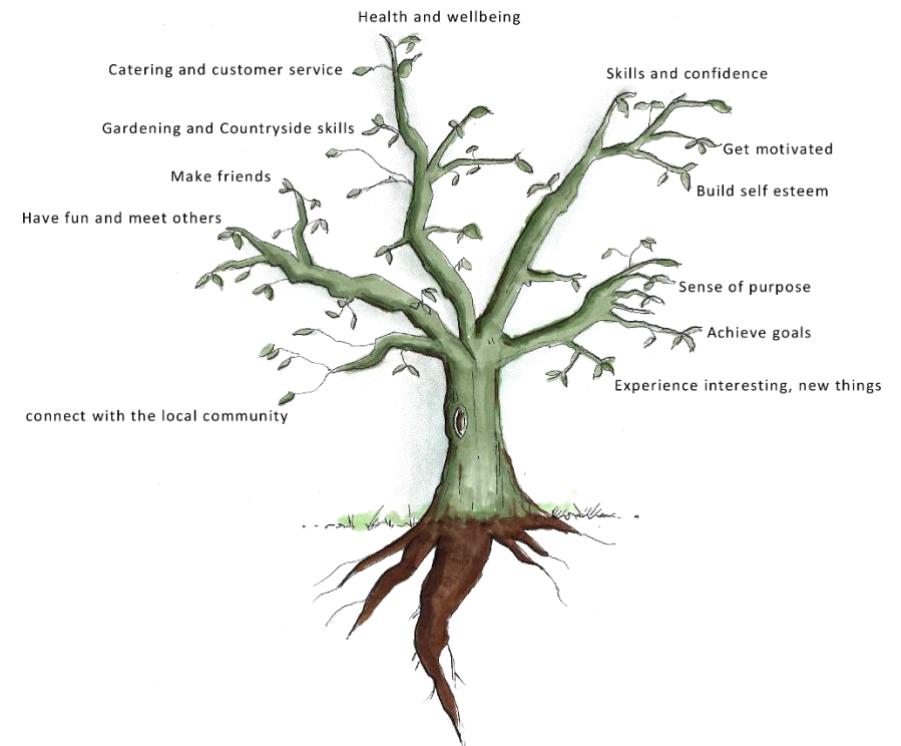
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Better together end of year 2 report to
Community Fund

Better together aims to support our participants to

- Regain wellbeing
- Increase confidence and self esteem
- Feel better able to cope with day-to-day problems
- Reduce the need to use NHS mental health and crisis support services
- Through activity build on skills
- Learn new things
- Strengthen relationships



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Lottery progress update report year 2

<p>Activities we have undertaken.</p>	<p><i>Favourite thing about better together is the support. I've never talked to anyone before this project you've helped me figure things out, connected me to other people and activities and I know you will know where I need to get if I ask for support.</i></p> <p>Mentoring sessions with people are typically once a week sometimes twice at the start of the working relationship Garden sessions at Green Synergy are twice a week. Abbey Access Training offers people access to 1;1 support to enable people to gain confidence to access cooking sessions and training activity as well as volunteering roles. One-to-one tasters are offered to people to come and try sessions with a tutor to see whether they feel that they could cope with coming to one of our longer courses.</p> <p>In addition, we began:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Walking and talking outside which started in lockdown with mentors helped get people out and moving their bodies and this very much opened up wider conversations more so than if we had been inside in our usual mentoring spaces.• Regular Facebook live events and podcasts covering people's news and supporting wellbeing.• Abbey Access delivered healthy cooking and eating classes to small groups with 1;1 support. It was extremely encouraging to see small groups of individuals with mental health problems gelling as a group and working together. The group dynamic has really helped some improve their mood.• Green Synergy has offered options for horticultural skills and therapeutic horticulture, crafts and wellbeing. Examples include yoga (£1,150 additional funding from Active Lincolnshire tackling health inequalities fund from Sport England, walk and talk, foraging, seed planting and propagation, harvesting, foraged wreath making.
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- A project WhatsApp group was set up to provide the peer-to-peer support people were missing from not being able to attend their regular activities during Covid lockdowns. This was particularly successful with people posting recipes, things they had grown from the seed packs that were sent out to them, chatting about their day and sharing successes.
- We posted out information packs to everyone on the project that gave suggestions on how to support their mental health including useful local contacts and numbers in case of emergency so that people were informed about what services were open and who they could access in a crisis.
- development plus was awarded £500 funding from Postcode Lottery to run Fitness sessions outside in the park with two trainers. After lockdown in March this moved online and ran until June with the personal trainer posting beginners exercises up every week.
- Growing kits linked with National garden week were posted out and a local nursery, Pennells, donated plants to share out.
- We made a series of films about Doodling which is a great mindful activity and posted out a hard copy workbook to accompany the film.
- Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP) group had just started at Green Synergy and through lockdown actively engaged these people online and through texts and calls.
- Calendars that supported daily actions to support wellbeing were designed based on participants suggestions.
- Participant JS organised and led weekly rounders and occasionally football sessions advertised on What's App and social media.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We started a participant led art group in November using free facilities provided by Abbey Access. <p><i>“I’m here and I’ve been to an activity. I haven’t done that for a long time I could’ve just sat at home and done nothing.</i></p> <p><i>“Yeah me too I could’ve had a bed day but I didn’t because last time was so nice so I thought to myself “come” make your self do it.”</i></p>
<p>How our work has contributed to our goals of early action, shared and sustainable spaces and places and stronger relationships.</p>	<p>Where AAT has identified an individual, who is struggling on one of our main programmes, we have been able to signpost them to the Better Together project to enable them to access the more suitable one-to-one support. This has helped us sustain those learners in learning rather than them leaving the programme altogether. This quick intervention has worked well in the partnership.</p> <p>Working more closely with mental health services from transitioning into the project and liaising with safeguarding issues and any associated risk has enabled a more vulnerable client group to access the project. Liaising with health professionals and clients has a prevention focus and impact. Year three will enable us to look more closely at this element.</p> <p>Three organisations working well together to cross refer and support participants, working as a team has supported workers on the project to share their concerns and work together with some people who benefit from having a range of voices around them not just one mentor. This has significantly shared expertise and offered greater wrap around support for people.</p> <p>Case study <i>Two Better Together learners have progressed onto a full Get into Catering course. They overcame their barriers and anxieties and attended the full 20-day programme. Both achieved Customer service level 1, Food Safety, COSHH, HACCP and First aid</i></p>

certificates. DS also progressed onto maths and English classes. Attendance has been hampered due to COVID, but we hope he re-joins us when the pandemic is over.

Case study

AE was one of our learners who was not coping on the full course and was referred onto Better Together. Here she has flourished, taking part in healthy cooking and eating classes and before the last lockdown was making great strides. Again, we hope to see her soon when we can. All the individuals that we have been working with have made progress with their mental health and enthusiasm for cooking. The group have made many different main courses and puddings and have been able to take the food that they have prepared home to show family/partners/friends.

Case study

AP was referred to us by Social Prescribing. Whilst he came across as confident and well spoken. he took a few sessions to open up and missed a few sessions as he was suffering from high anxiety and depression. He struggled with groups and couldn't sleep. He told me he struggled with his Autism. He was seeing the Crisis Team. From the start his mental health nurse, social prescribing and me kept in contact, as most of this was during this Covid year, it was over email and phone with the go ahead from AiP. At the beginning he was having a housing crisis, his landlord was evicting all tenants, this was impacting on his mental health and at times he disengaged but gave agencies the go ahead to continue liaising. He self-referred to LEAP Supported Housing, on the interview day he turned up but wasn't making sense which concerned the agency. They also networked with the agencies working with him and the multi-agency working strengthened. He started to see his mental health nurse more often and eventually started to meet for walks at the garden. Over the Summer he started to improve with weekly support from all involved. He started to take part in fitness sessions, one of his personal goals was to become fitter both physically and mentally. He provided great feedback for future sessions. He also started Yoga sessions at the garden and healthy eating at Abbey Access. He ended up moving to suitable supported accommodation with Framework. Occasionally he

	<p><i>will still disengage but overall, he is moving forwards. AiP has identified he loves the garden and wants to work on conservation projects, so we are working on this at the moment. We keep in touch with the other agencies every few weeks, especially Framework although he is keen not to have multi agency meetings for now. He was offered support with an Autism Support Group but declined the offer as he feels he will then have too many agencies supporting him. AiP is clearer on his life goals, understands there will be blips and now has a better awareness of his mental health and what is right and wrong for him.</i></p> <p><i>Mentoring through Better Together and support of the team has enabled AiP to now identify as non-binary.</i></p>
<p>How people have been involved in developing and delivering activities</p>	<p><i>“It helps people try new things and come out of their shell”.</i> <i>“Gets me doing things, always positive and encouraging.”</i> <i>“keeps me in contact with other people and staff, made new friends”.</i> <i>“It’s given me a new focus it’s given me the help to build my confidence”.</i></p> <p>We regularly ask participants what they would like to see happen with Better Together, formally through participant surveys, informally feedback from sessions attended and activities.</p> <p>Survey completed after first lockdown is attached.</p> <p>MG has been in contact with the garden for over a year. She does not want mentoring and has only recently begun to attend more regularly with a support worker. The support worker finished just before Christmas so I hope we can re-engage with MG after lockdown.</p> <p><i>‘Feeling like a normal human being, fresh air and casual skill building in an environment I actually want to spend time in, whereas I might not otherwise leave the house at all and suffer. Really chilled out, pleasant environment to be in that’s completely absent of judgement or pressure so the motivation to come is really high.</i></p>

These are the right kinds of people to be around. This is something I really care about doing and means more than doing something for the sake of it. Keeps me grounded in real people rather than always being treated as a broken patient”.

Our tutor, catering team and centre manager have been instrumental in setting up the healthy cooking and eating classes and developing appropriate menu items that are quick and easy to prepare. This is so that the individuals could then go home and cook without a tutor being there to support them.

We have also consulted with learners to say what they would like to do and be able to cook at home. For instance, in the sessions where we cooked a curry from scratch at their request, we selected all supermarket branded ingredients to show how cheap this was to make. This is helping with budgeting skills as an add on part of the programme. On another occasion we made 4 different puddings. The group did one each, but helped each other, so they learnt all the skills. They then shared out some of the puddings, so they all got to try each one.

5 of our volunteers and staff members have supported the Better Together Tutor to deliver the classes and support individuals with their barriers and anxieties. This has helped to ensure they all feel supported.

We are safely ‘growing’ volunteers and peer support on Hillside. As people spend more time on the project some see an opportunity to volunteer: This year we have worked with people to offer a flexible option for supporting the project either through garden tasks or befriending. If people chose to continue with this work, we have offered a more formal volunteer pathway. We invited a project participant to be part of the interview panel for the re-recruitment of our Better Together Project Officer and we were delighted when they accepted giving fresh insight to the whole process and enjoying participating.

This year we have also had two people who have taken a more formal volunteer role. They have undertaken a standard staff induction including safeguarding and First Aid Training.

	<p>They are valued members of the team and make a big difference to delivery supporting with activities and befriending.</p> <p>Statement from Volunteer 'MD'</p> <p>Hi Green Synergy</p> <p><i>About my volunteering with you is to let you know, your feedback and serious work teach me to be focused on myself to work careful with sensitive people. It is learning in each minute. Your trust in my responsibility is very important for my own issues and learning to protect being.</i></p> <p><i>I missing our clients and I am very sad about the Better Together stop. To these difficult times we all need well-being like you created.</i></p> <p><i>I hope soon we can help again like before. I'm really grateful to know you. MD</i></p> <p>Case study</p> <p><i>AP was invited to a two-part activity session making bird boxes. He ended up sharing his knowledge of tools and techniques and in a leading role. This helped with his self-esteem and confidence and taught him that he would eventually like a role working with other vulnerable people.</i></p> <p><i>An end of year 2 a project survey developed by participants has informed how the project will progress in year 3 and feedback for improvements for example included more fun activities and arts/crafts/wellbeing sessions.</i></p>
<p>How you have built on people strengths</p>	<p>Three words that describe the project from participants survey: <i>helpful, tasty and therapeutic, fair, helpful and friendly, empowering, inspiring, amazing, supportive friendly and encouraging, fun, life affirming, nurturing, uplifting, encouraging, helpful, genuine, considerate, compassionate, caring, kind, honest, Co-operative, encouraging, inspirational.</i></p>

By using a person-centred approach, we aim to promote a non- judgemental empathic environment where people can, over time be themselves. We acknowledge the skills they have as they may have lost sight of these. We give people options.

Feedback from our recent participants survey backs this up:

'The garden has made a massive improvement to my mental health and wellbeing. I am able to meet other people who I can easily relate to and hopefully make a difference to their lives. I enjoy the peace, the support and the choice to come and go as my mental health issues sometimes stop me leaving the house. I am so grateful for the huge support and respect shown to me. I am also being guided through the wrap course. This has been a major role in my recovery, especially this last year. I am feeling more positive and stronger because I am still able to receive support on the phone through the pandemic. I would like to be in a role within GS where I can support others that need it as I enjoy this very much'.

Case study

JS has made great strides in his journey with us. He expressed a desire to work in the catering industry as a Chef but had no experience or skills. His attendance for 1-1 cooking classes built up his skills, knowledge and confidence and he will now be joining a full catering course to undertake a Food preparation NVQ to then move into employment in the industry.

Meeting people for walks/coffee/activities and really getting the know them and what interests them, taking time to find out what their strengths are and building on that by finding activities that match them. Creating a holistic service for people that responds to their needs.

We have built on people's strengths by enabling them to work with others as we have done many paired activities. This has been deliberate to encourage them to begin mixing and overcoming their mental health and anxieties in public spaces.

	<p>LH asked to deliver an art session on her allotment to build her confidence in sharing her papermaking skills with a small group.</p> <p>Developing peer led groups whether this has been someone asking to lead a rounders group, share their art skills attend wellness recovery group. These groups have built social networks and allowed people to feel safe to discuss their feelings whilst combining their interests and having respite from their mental health.</p>
<p>No of people who have benefited from our project.</p>	<p>In year 2 we have had 72 referrals through the project which includes 11 people carried over from year 1. This means they have all spent a number of hours meeting up with the Better Together team to talk about the programme, show them the garden and the catering and hospitably activities and offering taster sessions before they committed to joining the project. 56 people have then gone on to receive mentoring support of whom 18 have now completed the programme. They have moved forward into further training or volunteering and some, an unexpected outcome for the project, have got into work. Others have left as life has changed direction for them and they felt they no longer needed the programme.</p> <p>Of this number there are 4 people who participate at the garden as part of the project who don't want to be mentored but who are valued participants. They are supported by staff who have given them the confidence and support they need to join the groups and build confidence through gardening. (see MG quote)</p>
<p>Volunteers who have been involved in delivering our project.</p>	<p>We have utilised our volunteers to support the cooking classes to ensure that there is always adequate tutor support available. They have helped to talk to others about our courses and have also helped with clearing down after the activity.. 5 of our volunteers and staff members have supported the Better Together tutor to deliver the classes and support individuals with their barriers and anxieties. This has helped to ensure all of them feel supported. 2 volunteers have undertaken safeguarding and EFAW training at the garden. 7 volunteers in total</p>
<p>Who we are working with.</p>	<p>We are working with a wide range of individuals, in terms of gender and age but we have been surprised at how many young male learners have needed our support and engaged with the project.</p>

	<p>We have also had to support them in many aspects of their lives, perhaps more than we anticipated for example housing, food supplies, counselling, and life skills.</p> <p>We are beginning to work more closely with people with more chronic mental health issues and diagnoses where there is a deeper level of support potentially required both as clients and volunteers.</p> <p>Lincoln Community Mental health rehabilitation team are referring people onto the project and this has increased significantly since September with 6 new referrals from this group. We actively met with lead psychologists and clinical leads for these services to encourage these referrals and social prescribers are active in referring to our service.</p> <p>Making links this year to young people’s alternative provision, YPLP, has led to several referrals.</p> <p>Circles of support is a way to support people in Lincolnshire with learning difficulties or autism to realise their dreams and aspirations. We made good links with their support workers and were referred 3 new people onto the project.</p>
<p>How we have engaged with diverse groups of people.</p>	<p>Referrals into the project come from a diverse group of people and we do get enquiries from individuals.. We have many individuals with barriers in addition to their mental health, such as drug and alcohol addictions, homelessness, debt, finance/money issues, domestic violence and low levels of academic ability, skills or qualifications and joblessness. This impacts on their attendance and their behaviour, causing some challenges on occasions and often despite these barriers people continue to maintain their attendance and progress well.</p> <p><i>An example is A– we deal with her worker at the YMCA, her Addiction worker at We are with you and the team across the project to help A with her complex needs. Before the last lockdown we were communicating daily with the YMCA support worked re behaviours, issues arising, medication for her addictions. Due to this level of support, it has maintained Amy’s attendance. If we had not communicated daily, we would have lost A.</i></p>

	<p>We continuously conduct outreach activities in places such as Shuttleworth House, YMCA, LEAP housing, to engage the hardest to reach who traditionally do not engage unless we go to their main residence. As a result of our activities, we attract a higher proportion of BAME learners to the average across the City.</p> <p>We could do even better with our offer for BAME community. We started to collate a database of information but because of Covid restriction visits and meetings, the preferred way to promote the project, with these groups has been postponed. Press releases and flyers are sent to our links into these communities and we have picked up interest before lockdown from referrals into the project from eastern European community.</p>
<p>Connections we have made with other organisations.</p>	<p>We work hard to connect with many partners to work together with individuals to help them progress. Usually, one service is not enough for individuals with complex issues.</p> <p>Quote from agency in support of the work <i>I work for the National Probation Service and was responsible for managing a registered sex offender who was young and had multiple needs. The service user had very little support, particularly after his leaving care worker left their role and wasn't replaced, leaving a big void in his life. Better Together were involved and provided the service user with additional support in many aspects of his life. He was supported in attending his appointments, adhering to his Court conditions, and Better Together also provided structure to his life by offering a number of meaningful activities. This service user was particularly difficult to manage for a number of reasons and Better Together certainly provided an additional layer of support to both him and the National Probation Service. I have no doubt that without their support, this service user would not have engaged with Probation as he should and could have potentially received further sentences from the Court. Their levels of communication and support to myself as a Probation Officer was excellent and I would like to thank them for everything they have done with this case.</i></p>



This year we have continued to grow relationships especially with agencies that also have workers who support our people, making sure we don't cross over with what each other is doing. We have seen a growth in referrals from social subscribing link workers and community mental health teams. Zoom and WhatsApp calling has helped us to continue these multi agency meetings and ensure we are provided the right support and signposting for each person involved.

Funding through Bromhead medical trust to support people into free counselling:
"Helped my mental health, I wouldn't have got counselling if you hadn't helped me or got me in touch with Network or garden and socialising with people".

Referrals and partnership working continues with agencies in the city such as:

We are with you - drug and alcohol service

Framework- housing

YMCA

LEAP

Doctors Surgeries

Mental Health Services both acute and community rehabilitation teams

Lincolnshire Partnership Health Trust mental health services

Lincoln City Council

Social Prescribing team and VCS

Probation

Leaving care

Circles of support -agency working with adults with autism

YPLP- young people's alternative provision

Job centre

Counselling services – Local Bromhead Trust has supported 5 applications to receive free counselling

Grant funding from Postcode Lottery

Grant funding from Pelican Trust for free tablet and Wi-Fi to support people to access IT and digital online platforms.



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	<p>Referral pathways into the project have widened significantly this year as the partners and the project have reached out and community mental health services have evolved. Referrals have been significantly enabled by the social prescribing service. Referrals now take place across the project offering more flexibility and capacity for agencies. We now have staff accompanying clients.</p> <p>Cross referral internally also happens within projects as other team members look to see how best to support a referred person and can offer them a much fuller and supported journey into wellness.</p>
<p>How our partnerships are working.</p>	<p>They are going well, and we are cross working with many elements of the project The B2G team from all three partners regularly meet up, currently fortnightly using zoom and during the second lockdown in person outdoors. In March we started meeting once a week to boost morale and keep the team updated on anyone of concern on the project.</p> <p>Safeguarding issues are shared across the team and are a regular agenda item. We have recently reviewed our safeguarding practice to try and ensure commonality for safeguarding reporting across the project. We will review our partnership training options in 2021. We share ideas and taking our feedback from people we try to respond to their needs and build the programme and activities around them, so we are flexible and able to adapt and change how we work. We have been able to share indoor spaces to add winter events into the project such as wreath making and Art classes.</p> <p>It has been suggested that an interesting exercise would be to do a toolkit evaluation of the partnership or to do our own especially if the project is extended.</p>
<p>Events we have run.</p>	<p>Weekly online mindfulness across initial lockdown period.</p>

	<p>development plus hosted a celebration event in February before lockdown inviting partners from across the city to learn about our projects including B2G. These are key events in promoting our work to other agencies and result in increased publicity and better awareness of the charity.</p> <p>Green Synergy led weekly lockdown green online wellness sessions, Christmas wreath making and socially distance garden fire pit gatherings.</p> <p>Healthy Cooking and Eating classes, maths and English, ICT and Food Preparation sessions are all new due to the Better Together project, to enable us to have small groups to give lots of 1-1 support. To promote our programme and services, we have been feeding the children and the elderly in our community. During the summer of 2020, we fed the locals children, put on activities for the children and did cooking demonstrations. Whilst this was taking place, qualified advice and guidance staff were mingling amongst the community to tell them about our programmes.</p> <p>More recently during January, we have been feeding 200 children a week with hot meals and this is linked to the school and free school meal issues. As each family collects their food and supplies from the community larder, we are talking to them about our programmes, including Better together. Leaflets are placed in food bags and this is generating referrals for the programme.</p>
<p>Talking about our project on social media.</p>	<p>This year Covid has forced us to utilise technology for many of our activities and meetings. We have learned a lot from this and will be carrying on with much of it. Podcasting has helped us to reach more people. These podcasts have including many coping mechanisms and also help connect people. We have had requests from people who are unable to sleep, a common theme, so we created our own better sleep tips and could then send out the link to support some self-help techniques..</p> <p>We have a Facebook Page in which we publicise what we are doing and utilise to deliver sessions such as mindfulness on Facebook Live. We also have a WhatsApp group for staff</p>



Abbey Access Training Centre

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	<p>and one for participants so that we can communicate what is going on and get messages to everyone quickly should things change. Reach since the start of 2021 over all our posts have reached over 900 people. The posts that have a better reach are those featuring pictures and videos, also the ones that have hashtags and tag other agencies.</p> <p>During the first lockdown in March all three organisations increased their use of their social media accounts to post articles, films, information about mental health and support services for participants and cross post across the three platforms. On the 6th May for example Green synergy 'Being in Nature is Good for your health' had a 1.5K reach</p> <p>On Facebook this included regular news updates, films of the garden and seasonal changes, live mindfulness sessions, art activities, cooking and recipe ideas.</p> <p>Using the Anchor app staff and participants created content and delivered mindfulness and meditation podcasts. 129 plays for podcast on meditation for beginners.</p> <p>GS use Facebook as an instant form of communication and the website is back up. We try to distribute a quarterly newsletter. We also had a regular programme of activities and posts on our social media platforms during lockdown, including a daily drawing challenge and weekly garden videos.</p> <p>AAT has utilised Facebook particularly to raise its profile about our services, programmes and activities. This has been increased enormously since we have been feeding the children. We have had several radio interviews and been on Look North.</p>
<p>How the project has featured in local press.</p>	<p>Postcode Lottery press for park activities fitness sessions Local press work across the project and for each individual organisations promoting their work and the project as part of this included: Lincolnite, BBC Radio Lincs, City Radio, Look North.</p>



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	<p>Lincoln City councillor, Jane Lofthouse, a trustee on developmentplus board has supported and championed participants on the project supporting them towards improved housing and financial situations.</p> <p>Karen Lee (ex-MP) in support of our projects and most recent work with feeding the community.</p> <p>Local radio visited the garden to report on the benefits of gardening and being outside. Participants were reluctant to speak so staff participated.</p>
<p>The difference our project is making examples and case studies.</p>	<p>Case study <i>WC – started with us as a referral from LEAP Supported Housing. He had very little self-esteem or confidence and suffered from depression. He admitted himself that he took no pride over his appearance. We started meeting up at the beginning of the year face to face, for coffees and chats to get to know each other. WC just wanted to build his confidence and experience so that he could get any type of job. After many meet ups it turned out he wanted to work as a carer with older people. He started to engage in other parts of the project, he decided that gardening wasn't for him but did attend a session at the garden to come and find out what it was about. He took part in fitness activities which were organised by another participant, football and rounders. Then he started attending healthy eating. He was doing 2 or 3 things with us each week and his confidence grew over the summer. He then applied for a care work job and was offered some bank work. This helped his confidence further. He is working now but also still meeting for one to one mentoring and healthy eating when he can. He looks and feels much better.</i></p> <p>Case study <i>Better Together would be a service that the social prescribing team class as essential in Lincoln. We refer large numbers of clients into their team, as their work in terms, of coaching, mentoring, creating activities and promoting healthy lifestyles is highly sought after in the area. The feedback from clients is always very positive, with all experiencing an improvement in their mental, physical or social wellbeing. The aspect</i></p>

	<p><i>of the service I find so beneficial is the way they work collaboratively with us and other agencies. They are always on hand for client discussion, joint working and action planning with other services be they statutory or third sector. They help provide mental health support for those not eligible for higher levels of LPFT intervention and for that reason we would struggle without their service to find that quality person centred approach to improving peoples lives in the area that we work.</i></p> <p>Case study <i>We have worked with JS a lot over the project time. He has attended catering, construction and moved between the programme more than any other learner as he could not make up his mind re occupational preference.</i></p> <p><i>We have supported J with job applications, and he has secured work. To help this happen we provided him with PPE as this was a barrier to him starting work.</i></p>
<p>Our successes and what we are most proud of.</p>	<p>Flexibility and creativity of the team to change delivery and adapt our service and bring in fresh ideas for things that we weren't doing before so for the mentoring side of the project this included using podcasts, Facebook video utilising a What's App group for peer support and to post information advice and support.</p> <p>To keep going with delivery when many other key services were closed and in particular not being able to meet people face to face where we were able to keep this side of the work going and having access to the garden and a large room at Abbey Access was a life saver for people's social interactions.</p> <p>To work in partnership with other agencies to offer holistic support from multiple agencies for that person; so for example social prescribing referral onto our project then following sessions to get to know them a recognition that they need a referral into the community mental health team, support to access their GP, referral to counselling services, re</p>

engagement with a social worker for their children, support to help them connect into professional services around their housing and debt issues. Where people have poor IT skills or no connections to social media or Zoom teams' platforms supporting them to access all this during COVID-19 by using our office technology and counselling space so professionals can meet up with them face to face.

Signing up to community transport Dial a Ride has supported many people who do not want to use public transport to get to and from activities safely and with support.

Success are having continuous support from our teams and staff members, being able to change and adapt, overcoming personal fatigue when at times we felt like giving up. It's been about acknowledging our own self-care needs too and recognising that unless we looked after ourselves we would be unable to support people in the way we do.

I am most proud of the group work and how individuals have come together. They have developed a real self-help group, talking about their problems with each other. There is a lot of laughter and the banter with them, which results in lots of smiling – excellent therapy – AAT

We have been delighted to see people harvesting and using the produce from the garden this year and participating irrespective of the weather especially since we have the polytunnel. It has been great to see people progress e.g. one B2G client move onto a horticultural employability project. Having two now trained volunteers on the project supports both their wellbeing and participants. This is not an easy role as a volunteer due to boundary issues and personal recovery but is currently working well. Yoga on Hillside was a real plus and we hope we can access budget to offer this again in the summer.

Seeing people develop through volunteering on the garden, accessing training and making a difference to the project - GS

Challenges we have faced.

Please see Covid report attached.

As Cafes were closed and our offices were shut it was difficult to meet people in indoor public spaces, so we used zoom, WhatsApp and walking outside when the weather allowed. We gained these back after the first lockdown but then have lost them again in the third lockdown.

Lack of other services, who reduced to a limited service during lockdown and we felt we were picking up their work. Drug and alcohol services were reduced from face-to-face access to a telephone service and this did not best serve some of the people we work with. The closure of CAB and council services in support of legal advice and housing issues presented delays for peoples claims.

PIP appeals went to phone calls and court appearances were stopped which was distressing for people who prefer face to face conversations so that they can present their best case and to try and have their benefits reinstated. We increased referrals for people to access food banks and receive r food bank delivery when their anxiety was too high to queue at the shop.

Referrals we didn't take on because circumstances changed. Covid fatigue in the people we work with who for many reasons did not want to engage with new technology, did not want telephone calls and retreated from the project or were shielding family members. We may never recover them back into the project to continue with the support that was started.

People not turning up for sessions when we have purchased the food, prepared material and resources to put on sessions. Lockdown and closures have really inhibited us being able to meet people face to face, deliver groups sessions and deliver our courses as many individuals do not have IT Equipment at home. They are also not very communicative if they are in a bad place, ignoring texts, WhatsApp and calls.

Some people come and see what we are doing and decide it's not for them. People are referred to us for example from social prescribing as we remained until third lockdown one of the few services still open to them and they are not suitable of the person needs additional support to access the project that we couldn't provide.



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<p>Changes we have made to the project.</p>	<p>Online Covid learning please refer to report.</p> <p>GS has topped the number of people permitted on site in formal sessions in line with our Covid risk assessment. This gives confidence to clients. The fact that we are a 2.5-acre site really gives people options.</p> <p>The healthy cooking class was not part of the original plan. but has been a great addition to the project.</p>
<p>Shared learning.</p>	<p>Learning from COVID-19 lockdown situation, podcasts, Facebook Live, and WhatsApp will all continue as good practice, using phone calls, What's App video is just as valid for some people as face-to-face mentoring and makes their experience more flexible.</p> <p>We have developed content around wellbeing with people who may not be able to go out at this time. It is also a great library of information to share as and when needed.</p> <p>More activities and diarised sessions has definitely been an unexpected spin off that we need to do more of after lockdown is over. Publicizing a timetable of events that people can dip in and out of helps them to plan their time and supports their focus to keep occupied and have something to do and somewhere to go.</p> <p>Working with volunteers with 'living' experience of mental health. Supporting and nurturing their recovery capital whilst ensuring they are aware of boundaries.</p> <p>The success of peer led activity. We have learnt that the small groups have been successful, and individuals have responded to this style, whereas originally we thought it would only work if we had people individually. Moving forward and post COVID we will look to do more group things.</p>
<p>Next steps</p>	<p>Next steps taken from feedback from people on the project and staff input.</p>



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- Delivering some more art classes next year
- Trying out hobbies so I don't have to buy expensive materials I can have a taster and try things our first.
- Trips out, somewhere away from Lincoln
- More 1:1 face to face time after COVID-19
- Excited about the garden next year and I'm into plants and growing stuff coming up to plant and harvest making jams from the produce.
- More group/social meetings. Not just about learning or mental health
- Activities around art and fitness
- Art and chat group (not particularly just a men's group)
- Cooking classes at the garden
- More art/craft classes at the hall
- More healthy cooking groups
- Links to construction – looking at DIY type activities – replace a toilet seat/ wire a plug.
- Volunteer training
- Horticulture level 1 courses
- Safeguarding training refresher
- Audit of partnership
- Extension funding bid for project

Additional reporting attached.

“Our year in Lockdown” Film links <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Jpd1FuOzuE>

COVID-19 evaluation report (sent to lottery in summer re-sending)



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