

Bristol Join-Up

Year 2, October 2020 – October 2021



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the care forum

Foreword:

Bristol Join-Up is a multi-organisational approach to challenging isolation and creating more socially inclusive communities. Through the National lottery Fund we have been able to reach people whom otherwise would have struggled for meaningful social connections.

More than ever people have needed other people. As interventions have become more digitally based, and the provision of services have become dominated solely by health needs, the requirement for a community movement to ensure that people are put first is necessary to ensure that real life connections are made. This project has created that intervention and ensured that regardless of digital accessibility, regardless of cultural or religious background and regardless of any disability, supporting the most vulnerable and or isolated people in our communities is a choice that can be made and a choice that this project took to make.

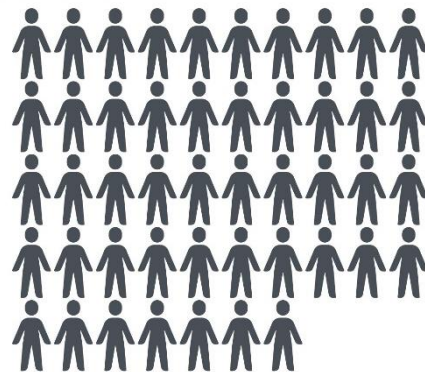
We have been incredibly proud to work alongside 7 organisations, supporting 47 staff and volunteers to work alongside 439 people in year 2. We are proud to have led an innovative approach to challenging social isolation and take this partnership learning through into new ways of working.

Evidence tells us that where you live is a direct contributory factor on your life expectancy. As

life expectancy across the UK is stalling and in some cases getting worse (1) interventions, such as those managed through Bristol Join-Up, have been the difference between life and death, loneliness or friendship.

The effects of loneliness are far reaching, whether this is connected to physical or mental wellbeing, cognitive decline or even diminished immunity (2). This project became much more than a 'multiagency approach', it became a 'movement for inclusion'.

Kevin Peltonen - Messenger
Chief Executive
The Care Forum



*47 staff and volunteers in yr 2

About our partnership in year 2

Our Bristol Join-Up Partnership

Bristol Join-Up is 7 organisations working together to engage people within 6 different communities. These projects include social activities, volunteering, peer support, befriending and getting your voice heard.

“Community empowerment is central to efforts to reduce health inequalities ...” (3).

Year 2 key figures:

- Staff and volunteers involved in Bristol Join-Up projects: **47**
- People supported through Bristol Join-Up: **430**
- Research participants: **115**
- Organisations online following: **2061**

TCF (The Care Forum) project details:

- Webviews: **1185**
- Strategic meeting representation: **500** hours

Project total:

- Staff and volunteers involved in Bristol Join-Up projects: **104**
- People supported through Bristol Join-Up: **735**
- Research participants: **365**
- Organisations online following: **2516**

Total value of volunteer time to the system over 2 years using a national SROI calculator is:

£321,464



Local friends have engaged with the Can Do Bristol team in several meetings to help them understand how the scheme is functioning, and how people find their website; sent them (on request) a report describing a number of important issues with the functionality and user interface. The activity consists of working with a mixture of people who signed up to Local Friends and those who signed up for Can Do Bristol, although it is often the case that neither the clients nor their referrers are clear about the difference between the two. I am working to ensure that at least the referrer understands the distinction and is clear which they are requesting for their client. I continue to send out email newsletters to our supporters and updates to the volunteers; we have had a number of Zoom meetings for the volunteers, and recently enjoyed our second face to face meeting. Some contact with the volunteers is by phone, with the occasional face to face meeting. We increasingly use WhatsApp for circulating emergency requests.

Activities have continued in a similar vein to last year throughout this reporting period. One area has developed since the last report: because we are providing support to our volunteers, we have found ourselves supporting them as they helped people who have not been referred to us – sometimes neighbours and other personal contacts, sometimes Can Do Bristol referrals though other schemes. These are our volunteers, but not our clients – not directly, at least – and I am not clear where or if they should be counted. I will include one story below. Similarly, we had several sessions providing support and advice to a lady in Brighton who is seeking to help people in her area: it is all part of what is being done through Local Friends, but doesn't really fit within the scope of the Join Up Partnership

funding. We have produced and maintained a list of local groups and activities as a resource for our volunteers, to help them know what is available, or becoming available again as things start up after lockdown, so they can encourage their clients, where appropriate, to take up the opportunities they might benefit from.

Number of volunteers/staff involved in the service: 30

People supported through the service: 24

Case studies

This client was referred to us because she needed a trusted person to contact her regularly via telephone as her husband has been ill and she is the main carer. A volunteer has been phoning her regularly during 2021 and although the client's grandson has recently been able to help more, she says it is still 'nice to know there is some telephone back up' and she'd like our volunteer to keep ringing, particularly as she herself now has some health challenges too. Also, although neighbours are helpful, our client appreciates having Local Friends as she doesn't feel she is imposing on us in the same way when she asks for help.

Ethnicity:

White British 100%

Age: 100% 55+

Gender: Female 100%



Bangladeshi Bristol Women's Group (BBWG) provides social activities and community support for Bangladeshi women. During Covid times they have increased the support for those in their community. Depending on restrictions this has been face to face (indoors and outdoors), over the phone, through WhatsApp and via online platforms.

The group has continued to provide fitness sessions, art and craft activities and yoga classes. This funding has paid the instructors, hall hire, cleaning, admin costs and refreshments.

BBWG has seen an increase in difficulties in the emotional health of their members because of Covid-19 and the women they support have said they appreciate the relaxation and respite the group provides.

BBWG has an active Facebook page where they share recipes (including Bangladeshi Spicy Chilli Chicken!!!) also information on Covid-19. They have a very active WhatsApp group for members, where they support and provide information to members around mental and physical wellbeing, they also signpost to support services. For those not on social media, they have been doing weekly phone calls during restrictions.

Number of volunteers/staff involved in the service: 6

People supported through the service: 54

Ethnicity:

Bangladeshi 100%

Gender: Female 100%



The Pakistani Welfare Organisation (PWO) have offered group activities and one to one support for people in Bristol. An example of this is their yoga classes, with time to play games and socialise together. They also do cookery sessions where those who attend can share recipes, there is a focus on healthy eating.

PWO were able to use this funding to buy a phone and credit to keep in contact with members when they have been unable to do this face to face. They offer support to women and those who are most vulnerable within the community, who don't necessarily attend the groups but are known through the group.

PWO continue to work in a dynamic way to support the needs of their community. For those who are digitally engaged, an active Facebook page allows people to access advice and information and see a number of health activities that are accessible in Bristol

Number of volunteers/staff involved in the service: 7

People supported through the service: 40



During this year, Bristol Older People's Forum conducted extensive and detailed qualitative research, alongside key research from Alive Activities. The research includes: Seven Face to Face and Zoom semi-structured interviews, seven focus groups of older people, detailed literature search – local and national. The development of this project has been focussed on our staff team working with our volunteer trustees. All older people.

The staff strengths include research knowledge and experience from designs through to report completion. Presentation and lobbying skills. The funding has enabled us to use the research findings to identify many of the key challenges of meeting the needs of older people post-pandemic. It will inform our work going forward and enable us to directly influence policy and decision makers. The legacy of this work will continue as part of our funded services and feeds into our consultation work, our meet up mornings – tackling loneliness and isolation our formal advisory role on policy to Bristol City Council and our Digital Champions Project – addressing digitally excluded older people.

The research work has been promoted through our email service to 1,800 households, via our website, Facebook page, via our quarterly newsletter and throughout our voluntary/public sector networks. The Care Forum Report has been posted out across their networks in Bristol

Staff and volunteers involved in the project: 5
Participants: 115

Quote from Bristol Older People Forum:

'People have been more fed up in Lockdown Two – feeling frustrated, not the 'community spirit' there was in Lockdown One.' *'The situation is now worse in Bristol because of the rise of cases. Somali taxi drivers have struggled financially during this period. With no work.'*

Case Study

A is blind. Throughout the first two lockdowns he has been shielding, primarily due to his diabetes. During a one-to-one interview, he stressed how important Zoom and other technology had been in keeping him connected. He underlined how the last ten months had been a real struggle but also wanted to mention some positive outcomes. One of these was the fostering of a strong 'virtual' social scene developed for blind people and those with sight loss. These include a weekly social evening, quiz nights and regular cookery sessions. 'Technology such as 'Be My Eyes' a service link to a volunteer to help read recipes has revolutionised the lives of blind people and have been even more important during the pandemic.' This case study has highlighted how more older people are using technology like Zoom to keep socially connected. It also focusses the need to ensure more older people are on-line.

Ethnicity:

White British 95.66%

Black/ Black British Somalian: 4.34%

Age:100% 55+

Disabled:100%



Also known as Bristol and Avon Chinese Women's Group (BACWG)

For this period, for the Join-Up project we have undertaken various different activities including hate crime awareness, surveys and recruitment of volunteers. For the hate crime awareness campaign, we have produced a hate crime awareness booklet into three languages (English, Simplified Chinese and Traditional Chinese). Both physical and digital copies of the hate crime awareness booklet have been created. These have also been shared amongst various universities in Bristol (University of Bristol and UWE). We decided to create and provide more information about the issue of hate crime as we received feedback from a member of a student society (ABACUS) that they believed that Sinophobia was increasing and were anxious about this. After producing and distributing the booklet, the students said that they were happy with the information provided and thought that it could be useful for those who arrive in the autumn as well. In addition to the hate crime awareness work, CCWS have also been designing a new Chinese student needs survey with input from Chinese students themselves on the design and content of the survey. The survey came about after discussions with a Chinese student where she expressed that she herself and many other international Chinese students did not understand the term of 'student support' nor did they understand the concept. Therefore, a survey was created around this subject which would ask Chinese students more about their understanding/perception of student support as well as also 'test the waters' on whether Chinese students would be interested in several current and potential services that CCWS deliver (Helpline, English Conversation Club, information workshops, culturally sensitive counselling etc.).

One of the biggest challenges that we faced for this period was that already from April –

September, the majority of students were either pre occupied with exams or had gone home for the summer, meaning that it was quite difficult to engage students and organise activities with them. Because of this challenge, this was why CCWS decided to undertake designing a survey with one or two remaining international Chinese students as it was hard to do other activities especially during the Summer. One of our successes, was that our volunteer recruitment has risen in the past month (of which we are in the process of approving them) so we plan to continue building up our relationship with these Chinese student volunteers, introducing them to the work that our organisation does and encouraging/helping them become a bridge between our group and the Chinese student body in Bristol. In terms of how we have utilised our volunteer and staff strengths, we have done this through building upon and using the 'lived experience' of our Chinese student volunteers to help decide and shape what direction and activities we should pursue for the Join Up project. The students have always been at the core of the project and are integral in offering their perspectives and opinions on how we should implement and promote the project (for example, helping design and shape the purpose of the student survey). We also use the connections that the students have built up at university to help disseminate information. For the next steps of the project, we will complete the survey (gather all the responses, analyse the results and identify the best ways in which we could potentially support Chinese students). From the results of the student needs survey, we then need to implement the findings. As we have also recruited more student volunteers recently, we also hope to continue our work through and with the help of them. We also hope to continue building upon our hate crime awareness work- and also to connect and liaise with other students of ethnic Chinese origin to establish what support they need most. In addition to this, we will continue to build upon our new student links and continue to develop our relations with university staff so as to further establish our project with more students.

Number of volunteers/staff involved in the service: 3

People supported through the service: 10

Case study

A Bristol student, JH, was worried about the increase in Sinophobia at the university recently. He had noticed that there had been more ‘micro-aggressions’ on social media directed towards ESEA groups and their friends had noticed it too. When CCWS raised the point that we were creating hate crime infographics and booklets JH was very happy. JH has been trying to raise more awareness about Sinophobia as it is affecting many students (JH has also made a speech on Sinophobia at a university conference), they believe that the hate crime awareness information booklets that CCWS have produced and given them have made a difference to their Chinese student groups here at university and has helped bring more understanding to knowing what is unacceptable, different ways to report incidents and where to seek help. It is especially good that the booklets are made available in traditional and simplified Chinese as well so they can share the information with Chinese students who have not arrived yet in Bristol. JH mentioned that receiving this information has helped them feel more empowered as they have been given more support on how they could better look out for themselves. JH thanked the project for the materials it has made and said he was very grateful.

Ethnicity

Chinese 100%

Gender

Female 50%

Male 50%

JY: (student):

“As a Chinese student, it was nice to have my opinion and experience as a student heard. I really like the mission of the project and am excited to see where it goes next”.

LR: (university staff):

“I think that this project is a wonderful idea and it was good to hear about all the work done in reaching out to Chinese students. It is a shame that the project does not cover the area of Bath, but in the future, it would be nice if we could work together on supporting our Chinese student’s pre-arrival, on-arrival and post-arrival”

The Centre for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People ran the following activities as part of the Join-Up Project:

- Welfare follow-up 'hello' calls for all of our hard of hearing clients.
- Zoom socials, held weekly as a virtual coffee morning.
- 2 sets of "Living with Hearing Loss in the Time of Covid" workshops. Held in May and June.

Phone calls

Previously we had contacted all of our hard of hearing clients by phone to ask how they were managing in lockdown. This exercise was repeated. We did not contact clients who had open referrals as this meant that they were already receiving calls from our Equipment Officers and we felt that another phone call would have been confusing for many clients. 218 clients were contacted, the majority by phone but some by email or text where their hearing loss meant that telephone calls were not appropriate. Responses to these calls were very positive. Clients were pleased that we were calling again. Clients were given information about services and changes to services. The most frequent requests in this round of phone calls were for information about audiology services and where to go to have your ears syringed. Clients were given the information to the appropriate service. Clients also made use of the phone calls to report faults with equipment we had previously supplied or to report a change in circumstances, such as their hearing loss deteriorating so that they needed additional equipment. Making the phone calls was particularly useful because many clients did not realise that the CfD Equipment service was still operational and so had not thought to contact us. Issues related to equipment were referred to our Equipment Service Team who dealt with the queries. For example, they tried to get clients to repair the equipment remotely

but if this was not possible, we supplied clients with new equipment and collected the broken devices, using Covid-safe procedures.

Zoom Socials

We held weekly virtual coffee mornings for Deaf and hard of hearing people. These took place on Tuesdays, from 11.00 until 12.30pm. Each week 8-12 people attend. The group is facilitated by a CfD member of staff or a trustee who is fluent in BSL. Before lockdown, the group met in a physical space and was a mix of Deaf BSL-users (the majority) and a small number of hard of hearing people. Since lockdown, the group has become almost exclusively Deaf BSL-users with the occasional hearing participant who has BSL skills. This change in participation is because communication for hard of hearing people is difficult on zoom. Since July, the group has met in a physical space at the Bristol Beacon once a month and virtually for the other 3 weeks. This allows Deaf people who have mobility difficulties or who live outside Bristol to participate and we plan to continue with this format as the participants enjoy meeting a wider range of people than they would if the group only met in a real space. Since August, the group has been facilitated by a Deaf member of staff who has a strong Deaf identity and the group has become more proactive with its own Facebook page for conversations and comments outside of the coffee mornings.

Workshops

We held 2 sets of the "Living with Hearing Loss in the Time of Covid" workshops. These are aimed at hard of hearing people and are delivered through zoom over the course of a day, with several breaks. We have tablets with internet access that participants can borrow if they do not have their own. Support to access zoom was provided by a volunteer from Age UK. The workshops look at communication tactics, assistive technology and mental health/wellbeing. The wellbeing sessions have proved the most stimulating with participants responding very positively to the content.

Successes and Challenges

All the activities brought their own successes. The Phone Calls showed us that clients are often reluctant to contact us about equipment problems. We have learned from this and will now incorporate regular follow-up phone calls to all clients on a rolling basis. The Coffee Mornings have increased our reach beyond Bristol and have been very motivating for the member of staff who facilitates them. We have had 2 offers of volunteer support from attendees at the Coffee Mornings and are exploring how we can best use these offers. The Hearing Loss Workshops were rated positively by the attendees and suggest that CfD needs to focus more on wellbeing services for hard of hearing people, either by seeking funding for our own Wellbeing Officer or supporting other organisations to become more inclusive of Deaf and hard of hearing people.

We also found challenges in providing these activities. The Phone Calls highlighted the amount of time that would be needed to maintain contact with hard of hearing people who are unable to communicate by phone. The Coffee Mornings also demonstrated the communication barriers that hard of hearing people face. We can see some of the solutions and hope to address these in a future Community Development Project. The Workshops were received very positively but recruitment was low; more time and resource would be needed to ensure a greater uptake.

The Coffee Mornings are led by the participants. The decision to have a mix of virtual and real meetings was debated and agreed by the group. Since the departure of our CEO at the end of July, the Coffee Mornings have been facilitated by another member of staff who has developed his skills in this area and is developing a plan to increase attendance. We are looking at how we can use the offers of support from the Coffee Morning participants. 3 of them have already volunteered to be involved in our recruitment for a new CEO.

The Join-Up funds have helped us by:

Allowing us to stay in contact with our clients during lockdown and in the period beyond lockdown when many of our clients were still feeling very isolated.

Enabling our Coffee Mornings to grow into a mix of virtual and real events. The funding enabled us to allow a part-time member of staff to work some additional hours to set up, publicise and support the meetings.

Enabling us to adapt our "Living with Hearing Loss" workshops into a product that could be delivered remotely. As many hard of hearing people are still reluctant to attend meetings in public spaces, we plan to continue to offer these workshops remotely.

Number of volunteers/staff: 3

People supported through the service: 302

Quotes

"It's natural for someone like myself with defective hearing to avoid anything that might make me feel not included but this workshop worked marvellously well. I could follow everything."

"I'm struggling. I can't get a face-to-face appointment with my doctor."

"I don't go out a lot. I'm still a bit afraid."

"I struggled during covid but am starting to go out now and pick up the pieces."

“Others had found support from family, friends and neighbours”

“My vision and mobility are both worse but family and friends visit so I get out.”

“My husband and I still go out to do gardening for neighbours. We can chat in the garden and we both enjoy this.”

Ethnicity:

White 72%

Asian 3% Black 3% Preferred Language Middle Eastern 1% BSL 14% Prefer not to say 21% English 78% Other 6%

Age:

Prefer not to say 2% 16-25 2% 26-35 5%

Gender:

36-45 7% Female 52% 46-55 4% Male 38% 56-65 6% Other 1% Over 65 60% Prefer not to say/not recorded 9% Prefer not to say 16%

Disabled:

100%.

Case Study 1

During one of our phone calls to Equipment Service users, AR, the client, said that she was having great difficulty in finding a local handyman who could do small jobs around her home. Previously her grandson had done these but during lockdown he had been unable to do this. The number of jobs had now increased and the grandson had a new job and could not help AR to the same extent. As a result of this conversation, our administrator researched

sources of assistance and prepared a factsheet. She sent this information to AR and then phoned her to talk her through some of the options. Unfortunately AR then decided that she did not feel comfortable or safe with a tradesman coming into her home, but she does now have the information. Our Equipment Officers also have this information so that they can give it to clients who have similar queries.

Case Study 2

The Coffee Mornings have encouraged several of the participants to become more involved in CfD. We are now recruiting for a new CEO. The Coffee Morning participants were updated on the recruitment process by the facilitator and 3 of them have volunteered to be part of a Deaf “Q&A” session for all of the candidates and provide feedback to the interview panel. One of the group, KQ, would like to volunteer in the CfD office to help with administration. We are looking at the feasibility of this as KQ would need accessible taxis to travel to and from the Vassall Centre.

Discussion and next steps

Whilst this project wasn't set up in response to Covid-19 it has highlighted a very real challenge and opportunity to the way the current health and care system is evolving.

Prior to Covid-19, this type of project, its reach and its impact may have perhaps been perceived as something separate from system development, something that 'Charities do'. As the impact of Covid-19 hit our most underrepresented communities, what we saw was that good old fashioned face to face work is not only an important element of community health, it is the cornerstone of it.

In November 2020, The SAGE 6 (4) reports stated,

"The most deprived neighbourhoods in England have a COVID-19 mortality rate more than twice that of the most affluent".

What this meant for the most deprived communities in Bristol is higher levels of vulnerability, higher levels of inequalities and the widening in gaps for health determinates and the wider determinates of health such as secure income and loneliness.

The community value and financial saving that Bristol Join-Up have brought to the system during the past 2 years is almost impossible to calculate. Some SROIs (Social Return On Investment) suggest values of 6x that of the original investment made. These figures are incredibly important, but more so are the stories of people receiving food and being nourished and having connections. The stories of community cohesion and standing by one another will live long in the 'community memory'.

As health inequalities are set to worsen across the country, we would like to take Bristol Join-Up to next level.

Utilising Bristol Join-Up as the building block for successful community inclusion, we see an opportunity that sits outside of the management of health and care developments. We believe that a dynamic approach to inclusion is necessary to ensure those excluded from system and service developments are not excluded from support and kindness. Taking the core concept of supporting and walking alongside hyper local community groups, our vision is to seek funding to create a *West of England Inclusion Hub*. This approach will see us share best practice, bring together training and development opportunities and work, fleet of foot, with groups who are supporting emerging issues within their communities.

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