

ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

The logo consists of a central pink circle containing the text "Healthy Valleys" in white. This central circle is surrounded by several other overlapping circles in various colors: yellow, orange, grey, blue, red, purple, and green.

**Healthy
Valleys**



15 YEARS OF COMMUNITY LED HEALTH IMPROVEMENT IN SOUTH LANARKSHIRE

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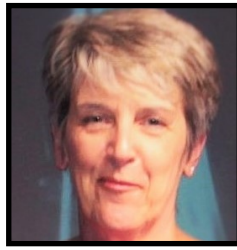
Staff 2017 - 18



Lesley McCranor
Management Team



Julia Miller
Management Team



Pauline Nichol
Finance & Admin Team



Karen Forrest
Finance & Admin Team



Sam Davies
Admin Team



Clare Cook
Grassroots



Adrienne Grehan
Grassroots



Kate Williamson
Grassroots



Simone Janse Van Rensburg
Community Food Matters



Gail McAra
Community Food Matters



Fiona Gairns
ReConnect



Barbara Harding
ReConnect



Christine Baillie
Fit for Life



Stephanie Girdwood
Smoke Free Project



Wendy Kyle
Community Health Matters



Elaine Tritschler
Community Health Matters



Jillian McFadyen
Community Health Matters

Chairperson's Report

This has been a very busy year for all involved with Healthy Valleys. The staff and volunteers have settled in well to Lockhart Community Hub in Lanark and the Cooking and Training Academy is now thriving with lots of learners coming together on a weekly basis.

People living in the rural area of South Lanarkshire continue to be affected by health and social inequalities. This Annual Report shows the many ways Healthy Valleys is responding to the needs of the people we work alongside and the impact we are making. Over the past few years the strategies and priorities set for Scotland and for South Lanarkshire have increasingly reflected the approaches that we know make a positive difference in people's lives: preventing problems arising or escalating, promoting good health and wellbeing and working with people to build resilience for themselves and their families and for their communities.

As a key community anchor organisation we are proud to be contributing to achieving good outcomes for people living in our communities as well as achieving the policy outcomes.

I want to thank the volunteers and staff at Healthy Valleys and the other members of the board for everything they have contributed to making this another productive year.



Anne Connor
Chairperson - Healthy Valleys

Board of Directors

Anne Connor

Anne lives one mile outside South Lanarkshire, in the Scottish Borders. She currently works as Chief Executive of Outside the Box, which is a small charity that provides community development support to groups across Scotland. Her previous roles included developing national participation projects for people using health and social care services. She started her working life as a civil servant and was a manager in the NHS with responsibility for mental health and addiction services. Anne has been Chairperson since 2016.



Bill Watson

Bill joined Healthy Valleys' Board of Directors in 2008. He was educated at Boroughmuir High School, Edinburgh and qualified as an ICAS Accountant with Deloitte. He then took up post as Accountant in electronic manufacturing before becoming a Financial Director then Managing Director. He won the Queens Award to Industry for export achievement. He has also managed distribution businesses in USA, Europe, Australia and Asia. Before retiring, he was Chief Executive of Scottish Rugby Union for six years, creating and chairing the Celtic League and sitting on the IRB 6 Nations and ERC boards. He also operated a private ambulance company in Scotland and North England for six years. Sporting wise, he played international rugby for Scotland in the 1970's and coached at Boroughmuir and Biggar RFC.



Fred Farrell

Fred is originally from the Glasgow area, he studied Law at the Universities of Strathclyde and Glasgow. Until recently he was a practicing member of the Faculty of Advocates and specialised in criminal trials. He is a member of the Scottish Medico Legal Society. Fred is married, lives locally and has a passion for motor bikes and classic cars. He is an active member of Coalburn Historical Society.



Leo Sherry

Leo joined the Board in 2012. Before this he worked in the public sector in the areas of planning, regeneration, economic development, community engagement and project delivery. Through partnership working he has engaged extensively with the private, public and voluntary sectors. As a volunteer for a number of years, he has gained an understanding of the challenges facing voluntary sector organisations in building their capacity for service delivery and organisational development. In his spare time, he strives to improve his musical ability.



Board of Directors

John Dalrymple

John is an experienced social worker who has spent the majority of his career working in services for people with learning difficulties in Scotland. He is currently the Director of Neighbourhood Networks. John was the first Chief Officer of the Grampian based Partnership Housing (INSPIRE). In 1998 he co-founded Support for Ordinary Living, a supported living organisation in Lanarkshire. John was also instrumental in establishing Values into Action Scotland as an independent Scottish agency in 2007, and now acts in the role of co-chair. As a hedge against retirement he has recently established a new consultancy agency, Radical Visions, with his colleague Frances Brown. John lives in Biggar, South Lanarkshire with his wife Moira and is keen on Hearts, jazz and Scottish self-determination.



John McCafferty

John has worked in local government for the past 28 years, firstly with Renfrew District Council (where he was involved in the regeneration of Ferguslie Park and other areas in Renfrewshire) and since October 1996 with South Lanarkshire Council.

John purports to be a golfer and a keen 5-a-side footballer and has more holidays per year than Alan Whicker in his prime.



Karen McGuigan

Karen is currently a Health Improvement Co-ordinator and Public Health Advisor for NHS Lanarkshire. She has worked for NHS Lanarkshire for 16 years and was one of the original member of the group that secured funding to develop the Healthy Valleys initiative. Her first degree is in sport and she also has a Masters in Public Health from Glasgow University. Karen joined the Board in 2015. She is passionate about empowering communities to improve health and wellbeing and recognises the valuable role that the third sector plays in this. Karen spends her spare time with her husband and two young son and enjoys running to keep fit and healthy.



Executive Manager's Report

I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work the more I live."

George Bernard Shaw

Communities Helping Each Other, Communities Helping Themselves

Over the last 15 years, Healthy Valleys has been working very hard to support people who are living in disadvantaged and challenging circumstances, through the delivery of community led health improvement services. We are committed to achieving and delivering high work standards to promote positive lifestyle change and reduce health inequalities in communities across rural South Lanarkshire.

Community is what Healthy Valleys is all about – bringing people together from various walks of life from across Clydesdale to help others whilst helping themselves.

Reducing Loneliness and Isolation

This year we have noticed an increase in the number of referrals from people experiencing increased levels of isolation and loneliness. This issue is not limited to rural South Lanarkshire but has been evidenced across Scotland and it would appear to be on the increase, which is ironic given we are living in an era where we are digitally connected and have immediate access to people across the world. However, there is growing evidence that whilst the latter is true we are also experiencing feelings of disconnect; disconnected from our neighbours, community and society. Healthy Valleys has taken steps to address this issue and has designed a framework for inclusion which embraces people supporting people. Within this year's Annual Report you'll gain an insight into how our volunteer buddies support people to get out and about and 'ReConnect' people with people because to us Community Health Matters.

Increasing Community Capacity

As an Organisation, we can never have too many volunteers. Volunteering is a great example of how people get involved in their community. As well as helping others, volunteering also provides an opportunity to gain new skills and experience such as: work experience, personal development, learn from and be supported by staff, increase knowledge of community health and participate in a wider social life.

Making a Difference

This Report will also give you an insight into how Healthy Valleys makes a difference, not only have we been enabling people to transform their life but we have transformed the former Lockhart Hospital into a Training and Cooking Academy and Community Hub; a place for people to meet, a place to eat nutritious lunches together, a place to learn new skills; a place to destress and learn coping skills and how to self-manage. A place where lives have changed for the better, a place to volunteer, to have fun, to learn, to try new things and ultimately reconnect to their community.

Lesley McCranor

Executive Manager - Healthy Valleys

Organisational Priorities

Established in 2003, Healthy Valleys is a community led health improvement charity and company limited by guarantee. We are currently located in Lanark and deliver support services to children, young people, adults and older people living in rural South Lanarkshire.

We have 4 Organisational Priorities:

- Priority 1 - Promoting Healthier Lifestyles
- Priority 2 - Volunteer Development
- Priority 3 - Organisational Development and Sustainability
- Priority 4 - Social Enterprise

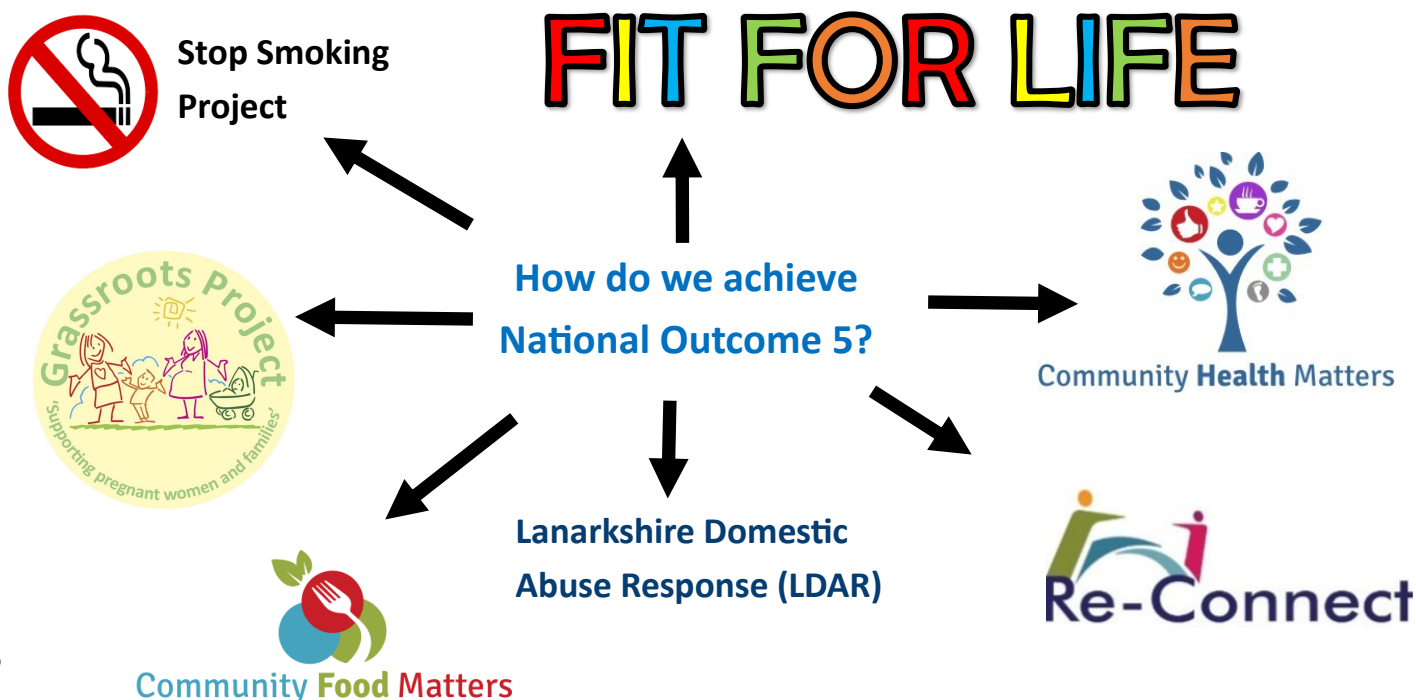
This Annual Report gives an insight into what we do to achieve Priorities 1, 2, 3 and 4 which contributes to achieving the National Health and Social Care Outcomes.

We continue to create opportunities to link people with people, to learn new skills, to uptake community based volunteering placements and support lifestyle change. All of which will contribute to making our rural communities a happier and healthier place to work, rest and play.

National Outcome 5:

Health and Social Care services contribute to reducing health inequalities.

Healthy Valleys' vision is to reduce health inequalities in South Lanarkshire through the provision of a range of community led health improvement projects that specifically target those people in need of extra support.



Priority 1: Community Health Matters



NATIONAL CONTEXT

Community Health Matters (CHM) contributes to Scottish Government Health and Social Care Outcome 1: People are able to look after and improve their own health and wellbeing and live in good health for longer.

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

CHM aims to tackle loneliness and isolation and improve the health and wellbeing of 16–50 year olds who are carers, have a long term health condition or mental health difficulties. We do this by working with partners, including a key local GP Practice, using a Social Prescribing model.

Social prescribing is gradually gaining recognition in Scotland for the value of its contribution to tackling social issues including loneliness, isolation and depression. It promotes self-management and is a means of enabling GPs, nurses and other primary care professionals to refer patients to a range of local, non-clinical services usually provided by the voluntary and community sector.

It recognises that people's health is determined by a range of social, economic and environmental factors and addresses participant's needs in a holistic way. Whilst medical interventions are often necessary to treat specific conditions or health problems, the importance of strong social networks, access to friends, family support and an active social life should not be underestimated. Community Health Navigators and Volunteers are the connect workers who help participants access this type of support.

"We cannot continue to provide healthcare to a sick population. 2025 needs a better structure of social prescribing, a move from just GP involvement. We absolutely want to see this. This means culture change."

Dr Chris McIntosh, Medical Director for Lanarkshire, August 2017



Community Health Matters

146

Referrals for
1:1 social
prescribing

131

Individuals
Engaged

74

Individuals
received 1:1
support

701

Health
Improvement
Sessions

"We are exceptionally lucky to find ourselves in an almost unique position that we are able to realise the dream of social prescribing in addition to orthodox medicine, which has been fantastic in helping our patients through difficult times and helping them to recover from physical ill health, depression and anxiety. I feel our partnership with Healthy Valleys has a positive impact on our patients well being. I also from a personal point of view, find I'm less likely to prescribe anti depressant and similar medications if I am able to offer the patients the type of support that Healthy Valleys can offer and I am delighted that we are actively involved in social prescribing".

Dr Lang, Douglasdale Medical Practice

Priority 1: Community Health Matters



"I learned to believe in myself more and to have more confidence in what I can do and that if I put my mind to it I can accomplish anything and to look at life different and appreciate the little things in life and nature."

OUTCOMES

Participants reported the following

100%	improved or maintained their mental health and wellbeing
100%	learned coping and self management skills
94%	felt more connected to their local community
82%	increased their confidence and self esteem
76%	improved their support networks
70%	improved their physical health

COMMUNITY ACTIVITY

We supported and signposted participants to our own activities as well as a wide variety of local community groups and activities. We also delivered some fantastic programmes including Write To Recovery, Wellness Recovery Action Planning and Branching Out.

VOLUNTEERS

In total 18 volunteers were integral to successful delivery of this project and positive outcomes for participants. Volunteers had primarily specialist roles including stress management therapy; groupwork facilitation; counselling and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy. Volunteers contributed 500 hours of their time and participated in training courses including Mental Health First Aid and Understanding Adverse Childhood Events.

FUNDING

Community Health Matters project is funded by South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Integrated Care Fund and Scottish Government People and Communities Fund.



Priority 1: Community Health Matters

Jill's Story

Jill, 21, has a learning difficulty and lives with her parents. She is isolated within the community, generally confined to the house or a relative's whilst they are at work. She has no friends of her own age but attends one social activity every week with her Dad. She was recently in hospital for a number of weeks with a mystery illness.

Jill was educated in the learning support base at school. Although she had left a number of years previously it had generally been an unhappy time and the events still troubled her, occupying her every thought, making her feel unhappy and depressed. She had visited her GP to ask for help and was referred to Healthy Valleys Community Health Matters project for counselling.

A cheerful and pleasant young woman, Jill found it difficult to trust people as a result of her experiences and she was not sure about making new social connections with other young people for fear of being hurt. In order to address these issues it was agreed that counselling would be arranged as a first step.

Jill finds it difficult to verbalise her thoughts so prior to the first counselling session, she met with Margaret to try to write down what happened.

Jill attended 4 counselling sessions. During this time she was able to write and send a letter to the school about her experience. School staff replied promptly and compassionately, making Jill feel better and put the past behind her. School staff are keen to meet with her and Healthy Valleys is helping to facilitate this.

In the meantime, Jill is being encouraged to try new activities and has informally met a few of the other young people involved in the project. It is hoped that she will keep building her confidence to take part in some group activities and make new friends.

"Counselling was really good. It was helpful to have someone to speak to face to face. Someone listening was really important. I've accepted that there are certain things I can't change but I am more settled and it's less important to me now".



Priority 1: Community Food Matters

NATIONAL CONTEXT

Community Food Matters (CFM) contributes to the Scottish Government Health and Social Care Outcome 1: People are able to look after and improve their own health and wellbeing and live in good health for longer.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

A Nation with Ambition: the Government's Programme for Scotland 2017-18 reports that their focus on prevention and early intervention will encompass action across government to increase activity levels, tackle diet and obesity and improve air quality to reduce the long-term challenges facing our health service and allow our people to live healthier for longer. Tackling food poverty is also a priority for us as well as reducing isolation and loneliness which also fits in with and contributes to the national and local health and social care priorities. In response to this, CFM delivers a range of food related activities which include cooking courses, community cafés, REHIS certified nutrition and food safety courses as well as a programme of physical activities. The community food programme targets and recruits vulnerable adults and families by working in partnership with various services, organisations and groups.



Community Food Matters

41 volunteers supported

Community Food Matters completing
a total of **1941** volunteer hours

Cooking participants report ...

"Been eating better since attending course, more fruit and veg, making soup"



SOCIAL CARE COOKING & REHIS COURSES

Social Care practical cooking courses – a 'hands on' cooking course (4-6 sessions) which teaches people how to cook basic, healthy meals on a tight budget. These courses are delivered to those most in need of our support: individuals & families who are homeless, living in poverty, have poor health (physical and mental), or have additional support needs.

Our Cooking & Training Academy is a REHIS (Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland) centre and we deliver the following national certificated courses to our volunteers, beneficiaries and other community groups:

- Elementary Food Hygiene
- Elementary Food & Health
- Elementary Cooking Skills
- Eating Well for Older People

64

Individuals
attended a REHIS
course

14

REHIS Sessions
delivered

104

Individuals
on cooking
course

18

Cooking
Courses
delivered

Priority 1: Community Food Matters

OUTCOMES

Participants on the social care practical cooking courses reported:

100%	individuals reported Improved knowledge of food and nutrition
100%	have improved knowledge of food hygiene
100%	improved social networks
85%	improved eating habits at home
100%	felt more confident to prepare and cook meals for their families
100%	gained new cooking skills
100%	have improved their confidence

COMMUNITY HEALTH CAFÉS

3 Community Health Cafés have been established in South Lanarkshire (Kirkmuirhill, Lanark, Rigside), running weekly and are open to all, including parents with babies and young children, young people, adults and the elderly. The cafés offer the community an opportunity to meet up, enjoy a healthy snack, have a chat and take part in various activities arranged by staff and volunteers or by other agencies. It is also an opportunity for those attending the café to find out more about their local community events and services.

265

Individuals attended the 3 café's

143

Sessions delivered

35

Volunteers 1220 vol hours

Many thanks to our funders



community food and health (scotland)



"A welcoming place, makes me feel part of the community & given me new interests"

Lanark café participant

RURAL CAFÉ

The Rural Café is a friendly, welcoming and confidential place for those referred to it. The café is specifically for adults/families in the rural area who are struggling financially as a result of the welfare reform. The café provides a hot meal and support every week, plus a meal to take home for themselves/their families. It is also an opportunity to meet other people, access relevant information and be sign posted to other support agencies. Involvement is by referral only. We've received referrals from a variety of agencies including: CAB, Women's Aid, Social Work, Blue Triangle, Money Matters, Community Links. The Rural Café is held at Lockhart Community Hub in Lanark on a weekly basis and we provide transport or bus fares to enable anyone living in the rural area to travel into the town.

36

Individuals attended the Rural café

47

Sessions delivered

6

Volunteers 335 vol hours



healthyliving award

All our cafés have achieved the Healthy Living Award.



Priority 1: Community Food Matters

OUTCOMES

Participants visiting the Community Health Cafés reported:

83%	increased social activity & networks
70%	improved sense of wellbeing
70%	increase in confidence & self esteem
65%	improved knowledge/access/support to other support agencies organisations
80%	have increased their knowledge of food & nutrition
76%	said they had improved access to food since starting to attend the cafe
73%	said they had improved mental health since starting to attend the café
68%	recorded they had improved their knowledge of what was happening/going on in their community
80%	felt more connected to the community

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The Scottish Government reports that the “health benefits of a physically active lifestyle are well documented and there is abundant evidence that regular activity is related to a reduced incidence of chronic conditions”.

Our Physical Activity programme is a mix of social and physical activities that provide easily accessible, affordable, local exercise opportunities. The activities are led and supported by trained volunteers. We engage those who do not usually participate in exercise for various reasons including; poor physical/mental health, lack of confidence, lonely and isolated, recovering from illness or medical treatments or who do not have the finances to participate in classes.



10 volunteers completed walk leader training

We have 7 programmes running regularly:

- 3 weekly Health Walks - Lesmahagow, Lanark and Biggar
- Swim bus—enabling easy access to local leisure centres from various villages
- Game On indoor bowling in Kirkmuirhill
- C’mon Dancing in Coalburn
- Yoga in Lanark

We also delivered Clubbercise and Piloxing classes in Douglas.



OUTCOMES

Participants regularly taking part in an activity report:

100%	participants reported that they have increased social activity & networks
94%	reported an improved sense of
98%	reported an increase in confidence & self esteem
94%	feel that they have increased mobility
87%	have developed better balance, co-ordination and movement
97%	less stressed and more relaxed

Participants report ... “It’s a jolly afternoon, it has revived my love of music and dance. I forget all about my aches and pains.” C’mon Dancing participant

“The walks help to get me out in the fresh air and meet new people.” Health Walk participant

Priority 1: Community Food Matters

Paul's Story

Before Healthy Valleys – what was life like?

Paul is 27 years old and lives with his family. He has had poor mental health since high school and was diagnosed with depression after losing his job. His confidence and self-esteem was at an all time low and he began to comfort eat. Weighing 29 stone, the heaviest he had ever been, Paul was “annoyed and disgusted” with himself. He had lost contact with his friends from school and was struggling to get out and meet new friends. Paul is on Universal Credit and only left the house to visit his GP or to go to the library – although this was also becoming a struggle too. Paul had heard about Healthy Valleys from his GP and Social worker. It was his Social Worker who called to seek support for Paul.

Community Food Matters involvement and benefits

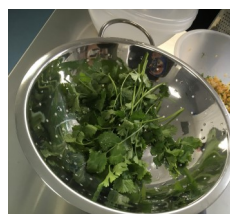
Paul required 1-1 support from Healthy Valleys Community Health Navigator, who supported Paul to attend a variety of Healthy Valleys health improvement activities including yoga, REHIS Elementary Cooking Skills course and then Paul started attending the ‘Weigh to Go’ classes (delivered in partnership with South Lanarkshire Leisure Trust, the Health Improvement Team and Healthy Valleys) which started at the end of January and were held at Lockhart Community Hub. ‘Weigh to Go’ is a weight management class that includes nutritional advice and exercise. Paul also completed a few more cooking classes to put into practice the knowledge he had gained on the ‘Weigh to Go’ programme.

Since starting the ‘Weigh to Go’ group, Paul has improved his diet and is exercising on a regular basis. Part of the programme is support to access and use the local leisure centre. Paul was nervous to attend, however, with the support of the coach and his new friends, he has attended the gym and has tried some of the fitness classes. He is now a regular customer. Since starting the ‘Weigh to Go’ class he has lost an amazing 4st and is feeling so much healthier and stronger and said he is *“on cloud nine at this achievement”*. He feels that his confidence and mood has improved greatly and he *“feels more alive”* than he has done for a long time. He has made new friends through attending the classes and can't thank everyone enough for the support that they have given him.

Paul rarely visits his GP now and he feels his general health has improved – feeling much happier and healthier and is enjoying buying smaller sized clothes. He previously only bought dark coloured tops and is now selecting brighter ones, which is also helping with his confidence.

Future Aspirations

Paul hopes to continue to lose weight, keep exercising and possibly find a sports and fitness training course so he can learn how to help other people who had similar struggles as he did. Paul would also like to become a volunteer with Healthy Valleys and help out at the Community Health Cafes. For the first time in a long time he has started to make plans.



Priority 1: Grassroots

NATIONAL CONTEXT

The Grassroots Project supports those expecting a baby and or those who have children under 5 years old who need extra help and who live in rural South Lanarkshire. The project takes a 3 pronged approach to early intervention:

- **Preconception Information Education Service (PIES)**
- **Intensive Parental Support Programme (IPSP)**
- **Family Education Support Programme (FESP)**



56

Individuals
PIES
1-1 conversations
or signposting

76

Individuals
engaged in IPSP
intervention

116

Individuals
engaged in FESP
activities



24 volunteers

910 volunteer hours

112 referrals

134 active beneficiaries

952 sessions including antenatal/postnatal appointments, social worker meetings, baby sounds, baby massage, external community activities, baby massage, peer support, family health & wellbeing course, second hand smoke awareness, stress management, healthy weaning, family trips and outings, art classes, active play/play@home



Priority 1: Grassroots



“Grassroots supported me during my pregnancy and afterwards and I’ve loved getting out the house, attending courses and activities to make me the best mum I can be. I feel so much healthier and happier than I ever have! I no longer have Social Work involvement because I am doing so well. It’s been just brilliant and although, I’m no longer involved, I know I can always contact Healthy Valleys if I need any more support. Thank you so much.”

Lisa, Grassroots beneficiary

OUTCOMES

Vulnerable pregnant women and families with children under 5 will have improved relationships within the family unit and local community:

91%	Have reported an increase in participating in activities together as a family
86%	Have reported that they feel more confident to access local organisations and services
94%	Have reported an improvement in their emotional wellbeing and resilience



Vulnerable pregnant women and families with children under 5 will be more confident and capable parent/carers:

73%	Reported improved parenting skills
91%	Reported an improvement in their confidence to provide care to their unborn child and/or children
86%	Reported improved social networks with other families



Priority 1: Grassroots

Lisa's story

Background

Lisa was referred to Healthy Valleys Grassroots Project in May 2017 by her midwife. This was Lisa's fourth pregnancy and there were concerns with regards to alleged physical abuse towards her three other children as well as alcohol and domestic abuse. Lisa's 3 children are looked after and accommodated and she does not have any direct or in-direct contact with them. As a result of this, a referral was made to Social Work Children and Families team and a pre birth case conference was held where it was decided, amongst partner agencies, the unborn baby should be recorded on the Child Protection Register.

Journey with Grassroots

Lisa was actively involved with Grassroots for almost a year. She was keen to prove she wasn't the same person/mother she was before, had stopped misusing alcohol, was not in an abusive relationship and ready to put her unborn child first. She engaged with any support offered by Grassroots. During her pregnancy she participated in a BabySounds session facilitated by one of our trained volunteers where the importance of positive communication and secure attachment are discussed. Lisa was also referred to Healthy Valleys' Stop Smoking Project where she was allocated a dedicated worker to assist in her journey to stop smoking.

Lisa welcomed a healthy baby boy, Josh. This was Lisa's healthiest pregnancy by far as she attended all her health care appointments, stopped smoking and was eating well. Lisa's 3 other pregnancies were all premature and low birth weight. However Josh was a healthy weight and discharged with no issues. Due to the significant historical concerns, Lisa was subject to a Parenting Assessment and Josh could not go home with her until her parenting capacity was fully assessed. Josh was looked after and accommodated by a Foster Carer whilst the assessment was carried out. Lisa fully co-operated and engaged in this assessment and due to positive progress achieved, Josh was reinstated in her care much earlier than anticipated. Lisa struggled with finances at first as she was transferred to Universal Credit and we had to refer her for support to Money Matters and to the food bank a couple of times. She now has a handle on her finances and is able to budget accordingly.

With the support of one of our trained volunteers, Lisa engaged in the following:

- Family Health and Wellbeing course
- Baby massage group
- Complementary therapies to de-stress
- Stop Smoking Project
- Attends Healthy Valleys community café

Outcomes Achieved

- Improved her parenting skills
- Improved her social networks and gained positive support around her
- Participated in local community activities
- Increased her confidence and self worth
- Improved relationship and bond with her child
- Josh is a happy, content and sociable one year old developing all his milestones

Priority 1: Fit for Life

NATIONAL CONTEXT

Play is a fundamental part of childhood, taking place within the home from birth, through formal and informal learning and in community settings through the use of public spaces and services. Our role as parents and carers is to enable and facilitate play. As policy makers, planners and practitioners it is to ensure play is embedded at the heart of decision making throughout our society and to provide the catalyst for culture change.

Source: Scottish Government website 2018

Fit for Life contributes to the Scottish Government Health and Social Care Outcome 1: People are able to look after and improve their own health and wellbeing and live in good health for longer.



We provided active play sessions (after school and evenings), Holiday play clubs, trained mini-play rangers and outdoor play activities to meet our outcomes. These were delivered in all of our most deprived rural areas including Rigside, Smyllum, Kirkmuirhill, Forth, Douglas, Coalburn and Carstairs Junction. Outcomes achieved for children and YP included:

FIT FOR LIFE

THE PROJECT

Fit For Life project (previously known as Go2Play) has successfully engaged children and young people, living in SIMD areas in a wide range of play opportunities (active and free play) which have been delivered in community venues, local parks and green spaces. We also delivered Early Years play activities (previously known as Parents Supporting Parents) where the children and parents and carers participated together, providing a fun and learning environment for families.

The project enables children and families build positive relationships, friendships and develop nurture skills, build confidence, self-esteem and fundamental skills all of which contributes to improve health and wellbeing and increasing physical activity levels.

100%	Children and young people felt fitter
100%	Learned new games to play
98%	Improved friendships and social networks
92%	Learned new skills to help them keep fit
90%	Improved their physical literacy/fundamental movement skills
89%	Improved confidence and self-esteem
87%	Could run better/faster
88%	Could throw and catch better
66%	Had better balance
71%	Felt more confident in playing games

“Play creates a brain that has increased flexibility and improved potential for learning later in life.”

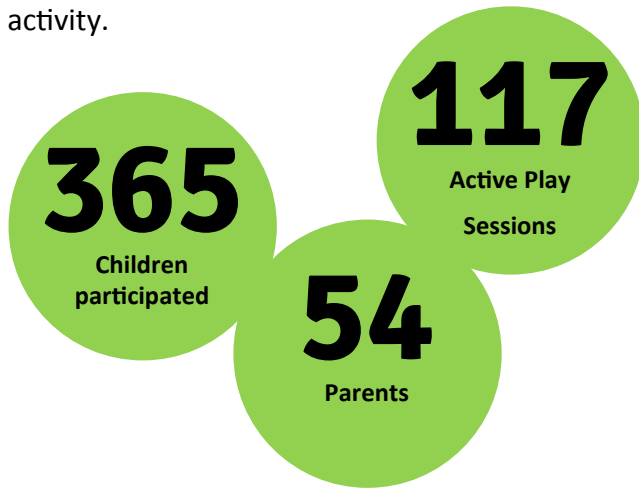
Lester & Russell 2008

Priority 1: Fit for Life

Parents reported their children;

Improved their social networks	92%
Had increased in confidence	92%
Had improved their running, throwing, catching and balance	90%
Played outside more	66%

86% of parents also increased their knowledge and skills of the importance of child physical activity.



Quotes from Parents

“Despite being a bit apprehensive to start, my son had a great time today at active play and can’t wait to come back :) this will be great for him especially with his school being quite far away, he struggles sometimes socially”

“My son was so much calmer at home after the play sessions and slept like a log”

“My daughter didn’t do much before attending the classes. She seems to be more interested and active now and has joined a street dance class which isn’t something she would before!”

FUNDERS

Fit for Life is funded by Children in Need, Inspiring Scotland and The Cattanach Trust.



Priority 1: Fit for Life



Scott's Story

Scott, 10, has behavioural issues at home and in school, resulting in a lack of friends. His family is supported by Integrated Children's Services as they have complex issues. Scott was invited to take part in a Play Champions course at his school, to improve his interpersonal skills and be able to play well with other children. Initially he was quite disruptive. However with support and encouragement from staff, Scott soon began to thrive in a leadership environment. He was very attentive to the teaching points that the staff were conveying about being a Play Champion.

As the course progressed, Scott acted upon any feedback provided to him so much so that every time he stepped forward to deliver a game he grew more competent and confident. During the latter stages of the programme he was very comfortable and relaxed as a leader and his skills and knowledge had improved. Scott also seemed to be getting on better with other children in class and was forming more positive friendships.

At the last week of the course, Scott helped to deliver a session for 5-6 year old children. The staff were really impressed with Scott's delivery, showing enthusiasm and professionalism and they were delighted to see a huge improvement in his confidence and ability "we were amazed and very proud of Scott's progression and his achievements through the Play Champions course".

Committed to PLAY



www.playscotland.org

"Scott's loved this class and really looks forward to it every week. He's been better at home and seems to have made some new friends. Thanks for your help." Parent

Priority 1: Lanarkshire Domestic Abuse Response

NATIONAL CONTEXT

The Lanarkshire Domestic Abuse Response (LDAR) project contributes to one of the Scottish Government’s National priorities- tackling the rising issue of domestic abuse. In 2016-17 there were 58,810 incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police in Scotland, an increase of 1% from the previous year. The Scottish Government’s National Strategy requires the collaboration of a number of agencies to support those affected by domestic abuse.

LDAR BACKGROUND

The LDAR project started in November 2014 and concluded in November 2017. It was created to support women across Lanarkshire who have experienced domestic abuse.

100%	Experienced a greater sense of general wellbeing
100%	Felt better supported and less isolated
90%	Felt listened to and understood
92%	Identified stress easier and were better at self-care
92%	Felt more confident
85%	Felt more able to cope with their feelings
77%	Were more comfortable with touch
79%	Had a reduction in physical and /or emotional pain
74%	Reported better sleep
28%	Reduced their medication

“I have witnessed the impact of this alternative therapy that Healthy Valley provides. Women have reported that they felt less anxious and it also gave them something to look to which was just ‘me’ time. This for many of our LDAR women is a rarity.”

Yvonne, LDAR Advocacy Worker



Thankfully, Healthy Valleys were able to continue to provide the Complementary Therapies aspect of the project. The Complementary Therapies that we offer include, Aromatherapy, Aromatherapy Massage, Indian Head massage and Pregnancy massage. Women referred to us, received 6-8 weekly sessions. We aim to continue to help improve each women’s health and well-being, increase their confidence, support them and reduce the isolation that they so commonly experience after they get away from their abusive relationship.

“I have felt very fortunate to be able to offer our women the opportunity to receive the holistic therapy that Healthy Valleys provides. I have received such great feedback from the women who have attended and have noticed the positive impact it has had.”

Kirsten EVA NHS Psychologist

"I actually dreaded my first session as I didn't think an oil could help me, but how wrong was I?! The spray that I got to make up for myself, helped so much with my anxiety attacks that my tablets weren't relevant in comparison. The massages are just brilliant, the first session was so euphoric. I came out feeling so relaxed, happy and clear headed which is something I really needed. I got to take my oils home and I honestly use them every day and have even started ordering my own. On my own choice I came off my antidepressant tablets and feel a million times better for it. I take my oils everywhere with me."



EXTERNAL EVALUATION

In March 2018, an External Evaluation was undertaken of the LDAR project as a whole. Women said that the Complementary Therapies sessions helped by:

- Helping them sleep
- Making them feel more positive
- Taking a weight off their shoulders
- Releasing pressure
- Helping them feel less 'shut down'
- Helping them cry (relief)
- Going back to basics – remembering happier times
- Giving them back control
- Linking them into other opportunities: volunteering, further training
- Reducing prescription medicines or coming off these entirely
- Encouraging them to look after themselves: personal hygiene, dental treatment

The report also noted that women had said that they had found it difficult to come to the first appointment. Below are their reasons why:

- Felt numb
- Felt dirty and violated
- Could not be touched by anyone or touch anyone, including their children
- Could not look anyone in the eye
- Avoided social contact and rarely left the house
- Felt lonely
- Were on various prescription medications typically for depression
- Were still experiencing abuse, harassment, blame and shame

84

Women Supported

61

Referrals

375

Therapy Sessions

Priority 1: Lanarkshire Domestic Abuse Response

Pam's Story

Pam was referred to Healthy Valleys by her EVA Psychologist. She had suffered various traumas over the years since she was a child and latterly she lived with an abusive partner for years. When Pam first came in for her sessions she had high levels of anxiety and depression, very low energy and low confidence. She didn't sleep well as her mind was hyperalert. She also had physical pain all over her body, especially in areas where she had suffered injuries from the abuse. She had been off her work due to this pain in her body, which was debilitating.

After the first consultation, Pam was given a blend of essential oils to take home. This consisted of Rose, Clary Sage, Cypress, Frankincense and Marjoram essential oils. She used her oils daily at home, mainly in a bath. She felt a huge difference in herself almost instantly. She found that the oils helped reduce her anxiety during the day and they also helped her sleep much better at night. She felt that her body was finally starting to unwind after all these years.

This felt good, but also made her aware just how tight she had been holding her body for pretty much most of her life. After her first massage treatment, she said that the following week she felt that her mood had lifted and she felt stronger in herself. She also continued to feel her body loosening off and found that she had greater movement in her back and hips. Another week on after another session, she said she felt 'lighter' in herself and she was amazed at how much the oils were helping her.

Pam had kept herself together for years and never really cried. She knew that she had a great amount of tears that needed to come out, she felt this as a heaviness in her chest. On her 5th session we used a blend of Lavender, Marjoram, Lemon and Eucalyptus essential oils, of which she especially felt Marjoram seemed to connect to that tight place in her chest. The following week she said she had had a big emotional release at home after a bath with these oils. She said that she felt better after it, another level 'lighter' in herself.

Pam found that having the regular sessions has really helped her feel more valued in herself, as if the areas of her body which had been abused were getting released off each week and being replaced instead with a sense of worth. She feels like her body is coming back into alignment and is more balanced within herself both mentally and physically. She has diligently used the oils daily and done the advised stretches for her back, both of which she feels have made a huge difference. She felt a real acceptance coming to a therapist who is there specifically to help those who have suffered abuse. Consequently, she felt she was able to express how she was feeling and in turn was therefore able to receive all the benefits that she did after her 8 weekly sessions. Pam is now back to work full time. She feels she has learned new ways to look after herself and this helps her cope much better.

"I feel a massive difference in myself each week. I feel like a weight has been lifted off and I am finally starting to relax after all these years."



Priority 1: ReConnect

NATIONAL CONTEXT

ReConnect contributes to the Scottish Governments Health and Social Care Outcome 2: Support and enable people, including those with disabilities or long term conditions, or who are frail to live, as far as reasonably practical, independently at home or in a homely setting in their community.

A Connected Scotland - Tackling Loneliness and Isolation Strategy states "The 3rd Sector has an important role to play in tackling social isolation and loneliness as they are generally rooted within their communities and are well positioned to offer interventions and support in a different way to statutory services."

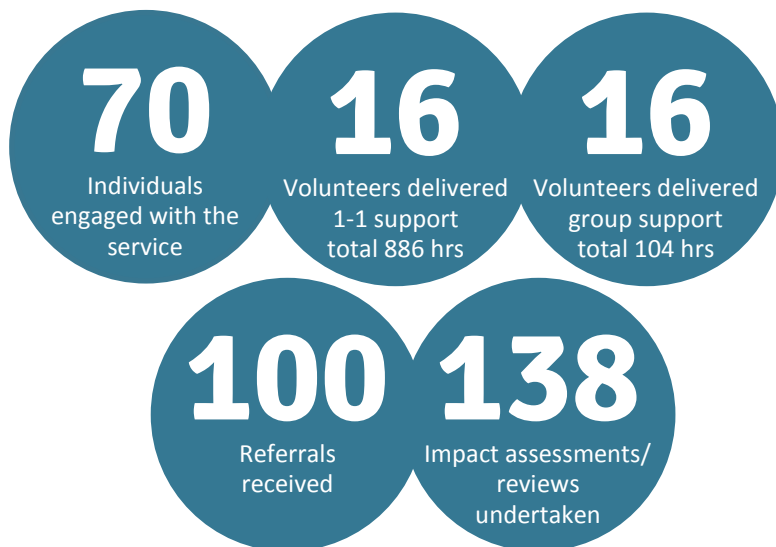
Local GPs report that they are working with older people whose isolation is having significant negative effects on their health, including:

- Decreased feelings of vitality and energy
- Greater likelihood of emergency hospital admission
- Regular feelings of loneliness and depression
- Decreased levels of happiness and satisfaction with life

"One of the key areas Healthy Valleys target is loneliness and isolation. They impact greatly on patients' lives and on their mental health in particular".
Dr J Torrens, Douglasdale Medical Practice



"Your input into Patricia's life has benefitted her enormously. Her confidence to go out has improved and she is participating in so much more. The work that you do has complemented the work that we do and combining forces has changed Patricia's life."



New social/activity groups for older people were established in Lanark, Douglas and Lesmahagow



"How rewarding it is to a "happy" part of someone's life. To not have specific times and be watching the clock, but be focussed on listening, caring and encouraging someone back to good social interactions and better mental health. It's a privilege." Volunteer

Priority 1: ReConnect



We know that social isolation and loneliness can contribute to poor health and wellbeing and conversely, people with poor physical and/or mental health may become more isolated due to the barriers their conditions present. The value of complementary therapies in increasing social connectedness through pain reduction and improving self-esteem was evident this year.

“I found my therapy sessions really helpful, it not only alleviated some of my physical pain but opened my mind to the psychological benefits that are gained from non-medical interventions. The techniques I have been taught helps to reduce my stress and I feel more in control of my life and more positive about the future. I’m looking forward to a more active life.”

“We have many isolated older patients in the Douglas, Glespin and Coalburn area with significant co morbidity who would gain valuable support from Healthy Valleys. We are exceptionally lucky to be in an almost unique position to realise the dream of social engagement in addition to orthodox medicine, which will be fantastic in helping our patients to recover from physical ill health, depression and anxiety and coping with the isolation which often comes with old age.”
Dr Lang, Douglasdale Medical Practice

OUTCOMES

Beneficiaries reported:

75%	older people reported an increased level of confidence, self-esteem & positive outlook
86%	older people reported increased social connections & networks
81%	older people reported feeling less isolated/and or lonely
75%	older people reported increased involvement in local activities
58%	older people reported improvement in health & wellbeing



The project will be funded by BIG Lottery until January 2019.

Our ReConnect project has been successful in turning round the lives of older people as detailed in the case study attached. Whilst not every individual reaches full independence, the huge differences in individuals lives are apparent and would not have happened without the intervention of ReConnect. Demand for our service increases year on year as word of the work we undertake gets known.

Priority 1: ReConnect

Betty's Story

Background

Betty was referred to ReConnect by her Community Psychiatric Nurse. She has recently lost her husband and is still grieving. The bereavement has affected her deeply and impacted on her confidence in daily living. She lives in a sheltered housing complex but other than paid staff, receives no visitors. Betty has one surviving sister who she does not see. Betty suffers from low mood and has a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease which affects not only her memory but her perception of events and conversations. Betty can display challenging behaviour and has a history of complaining against various agencies involved in her care. Last year, Betty spent Christmas alone.

Betty's Journey

Betty was matched with her volunteer Cathy and in 6 months has made remarkable progress. Betty and Cathy have formed a trusting bond with good rapport. Cathy is the only person involved in Betty's care that she has not complained about. Cathy supports Betty with practical tasks such as shopping, healthcare appointments and organising her mail.

Betty and Cathy also have fun times out. Betty has been re-introduced to the world of coffee and now enjoys a Latte. Cathy has also helped Betty to learn how to use her contactless card when shopping. On one outing, Betty met an old neighbour and has visited her at her home for lunch independently of Cathy. Betty has enjoyed day trips to local areas she used to visit with her late husband and more trips are being planned.

Betty will this year be attending a locally organised Christmas Lunch for people on their own at Christmas.

Cathy's Input

Supporting Betty is not easy. Her behaviour can be challenging and Cathy always has to be careful that what she says is not misinterpreted due to Betty's diagnosis. Despite this, Betty and Cathy just seem to click. Betty looks forward to Cathy's visits and talks highly of her. Cathy is determined to make a positive difference in Betty's life and refuses to give up on her despite the complexity of her condition. Cathy is testament to the difference volunteers can make to an older person's quality of life where other agencies have struggled.



Priority 1: Smoke-Free Project

NATIONAL CONTEXT

The Smoke-Free project contributes to the Scottish Governments Health and Social Care Outcome 5: Health and social care services contribute to reducing health inequalities.

Smoking is the primary preventable cause of ill-health and premature death. Each year in Scotland alone tobacco kills around 10,000 Scots equating to one fifth of all deaths; it is linked to 128,000 hospital admissions and it costs the NHS more than £300 million.

Smoking has an enormous influence on the health of people in Scotland. Despite recent reductions in smoking levels and early evidence of the positive impact this has on people's health, there are still relatively high levels of smoking in Scotland, particularly amongst certain groups of individuals. It is particularly important to reduce levels of smoking amongst the young, the deprived and pregnant women.

Scottish Government 2018



Approximately 1.2 million children in the UK are living in poverty in households where adults smoke. If these adults quit and the costs of smoking were returned to household budgets, 365,000 of these children would be lifted out of poverty. ASH Scotland 2018



WHAT WE DO IN RESPONSE

In partnership with NHS Lanarkshire our aim is to improve tobacco awareness, help families keep their homes and cars smoke-free and provide unique and intensive support to those living in our most deprived communities to stop smoking.

We know that smoking rates are higher in these areas and recognise that stopping smoking can be particularly difficult for those who are experiencing challenges in their lives. By targeting our specialist support towards these vulnerable groups, we can help those most in need and are getting high numbers of beneficiaries who are successfully stopping smoking.

We understand that for a person to make a successful quit attempt it is important to make sure they are receiving the right support in all aspects of their life, so we also refer our beneficiaries to other projects within Health Valleys and partner organisation's. This makes a massive difference as people feel like they have someone who they can speak to as often as they need and someone who can offer them advice and support with any other challenges that they are experiencing.

Stopping smoking is something that not only affects the life of the smoker but also their whole family and their wider social circle. We educate all of our project beneficiaries on the dangers of second-hand smoke and help them to plan ways in which they can keep smoke outside away from others. In doing this we help children access their right to breathe fresh air and be protected from the damaging effects of the chemicals contained in second-hand smoke. We also create smoke-free streets where residents pledge not to smoke or allow smoking in their homes and cars.

Priority 1: Smoke-Free Project



29 households in Rigside signed up to the pledge and more positive anti-tobacco role models were created regardless of their smoking status. This has a positive impact on the lives of many young people, protecting them now and reducing the likelihood of them starting to smoke in the future.

We work closely with local schools and other partner agencies encouraging them to prioritise tobacco issues and sign ASH Scotland's Charter for a Tobacco-free Generation. All of this work helps towards the Scottish Governments target of creating a smoke-free Scotland by 2034.

OUTCOMES

Outcome 1: Smokers living in SIMD Datazones 1 + 2 will stop smoking

Outcome 2: People living in SIMD Datazones 1 + 2 will be made aware of the dangers of second-hand smoke and be encouraged and supported to have smoke-free homes and cars

Outcome 3: Partner organisations will sign the ASH Scotland Charter for a Tobacco-free Generation and take forward their own anti-tobacco actions.

56%	individuals successful quit = 4 weeks
51%	Individuals successful quit = 12 weeks

"Thanks to Healthy Valleys for encouraging me to do something I didn't think I would ever be able to do. 3 months now not smoking and here's to a healthy future"

73
Individuals accessed support to stop smoking

41
Individuals successfully stopped smoking for at least 4 weeks

37
Individuals successfully stopped smoking for at least 12 weeks



84 group smoking cessation sessions with an NHS specialist nurse were facilitated.

191 home visits were completed within **29** different households.

9 training sessions on the dangers of smoking and second-hand smoke were delivered.

3 partners officially signed the ASH Scotland charter:

Robert Owen Primary School, Bent Primary School, Thornton Road Community Centre.

29 households pledged to keep a smoke-free home and car regardless of their smoking status.

"Very happy with the help and support from Healthy Valleys to help stop my partner from smoking. Our house is now a non-smoking place, my children are no longer exposed to second-hand smoke reducing their risk of suffering from health conditions and them wanting to smoke when they are older, great service"



Priority 1: Smoke-Free Project

Linda's Story

Linda, 38, a single mother to 5 children, 4 of whom were under 16, had been a smoker for 27 years. She was not a heavy smoker, had not smoked during pregnancy but had went back to smoking straight after the children were born. When asked why she wanted to engage with Healthy Valleys to stop she said that she had *“had enough of smoking”* and that she just couldn't quit on her own, *“Healthy Valleys provide local support and they are approachable and knowledgeable, I know them”*.

Linda was asked how she found the support she had received from Healthy Valleys and the NHS – *“It was so helpful, I knew Stephanie and that made home visits much less scary, I hate new situations and faces it makes me so nervous”* One of the things that Linda highlighted as being important was the continued support after she had to quit, *“having consistent support was so important to me even after I had quit, I have never stayed quit, look at me now”*.

Being a non-smoker has had a tremendous impact on Linda and her family: *“Having the money to take the kids places and do things with them means everything to me, we have already booked to camping at the end of the month and I can't wait”*. Linda has also started to put some money away into a savings account which will be used *“for a rainy day or when the kids are older”*.

And the best thing about being smoke-free? *“I can actually walk again without being embarrassingly out of breath” “I had put on so much weight, now I am walking for miles again and enjoying it”*. She also stated that because she was walking more the kids were more active too and that this was having a positive effect on everyone's mood. *“I have found the new me, I can't believe that I smoked for so long!”*

Brian's Story

Brian lived at home with his Father. Raised in a family of smokers, it was the social norm to smoke and so he had started at a young age. Now, at age 21, he was experiencing negative effects on his breathing and fitness due to smoking heavily over the years and living in a smoke filled environment.

Brian was participating in support from another Healthy Valleys Project where stop smoking support was highlighted to him. He really wanted to stop smoking but his Dad didn't, and he was worried about having to ask his Dad to smoke outside.

When the Project Worker and NHS Specialist Nurse met Brian, he was extremely nervous and did not make a lot of eye contact. His Dad was at home but stayed in the kitchen for the duration of the visit.

One of the first tasks was to give Brian ways in which he could speak to his Dad about keeping the home smoke-free. We spoke positively about the benefits of a smoke-free home and how this could be achieved. Brian was provided with door hangers saying it was a smoke-free home and asked him to remove all ash trays and any other smoking paraphernalia from the home to help embed the new behaviours. We had hoped that having the conversation in the home with his Dad present may have made future conversations on this issue a little easier. This worked and at the next visit the home was completely smoke-free, and Brian was successfully using his nicotine patches and gum and was looking forward to the future.

Priority 2: Volunteer Development

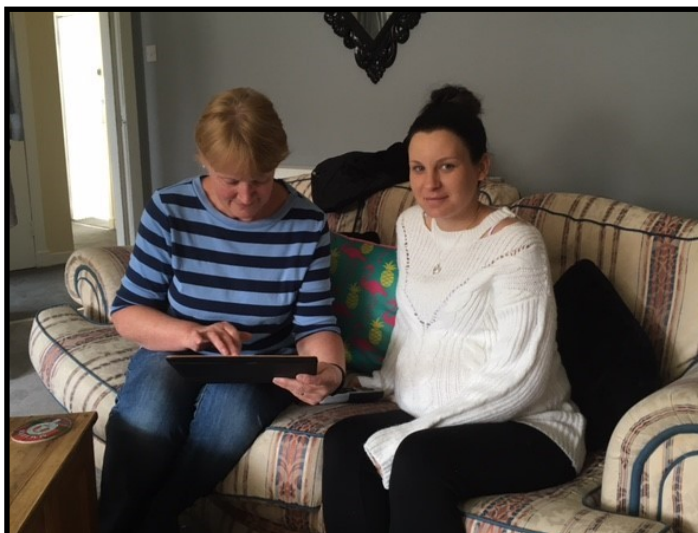
According to the latest findings from the Scottish Household Survey (2016), 27% of adults in Scotland – that’s over 1.2 million people – have volunteered formally through an organisation or group over a period of a year. This figure has remained relatively stable for the last 10 years.

Our team of over 90 volunteers play a pivotal role in providing vital services to people in South Lanarkshire who require that little bit of extra help and support.

VOLUNTEER ROLES

Healthy Valleys has more than 10 roles available to people who want to volunteer. These include:

- Providing support to parents and kinship carers
- Helping isolated, lonely older people to link in with their local communities
- Delivering healthy eating courses and assisting at community health cafes
- Helping individuals with long-term health conditions learn coping and self management strategies
- Supporting children’s active play sessions (indoor and outdoor)
- Delivery of Food Bank parcels, supporting Clydesdale Food Bank
- Walk leaders
- Bringing together mums, dads, grandparents and carers in group settings
- Counsellors
- Complementary Therapists



BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

Gaining Confidence

Volunteers have gained confidence by trying something new and building a real sense of achievement

Making a Difference

Volunteers have made a real and valuable positive affect on people, communities and society in general

Meeting People

Volunteers have met different kinds of people and made new friends – and joining social groups

Being Part of a Community

Volunteers have felt part of something outside their friends and family

Learning New Skills

Volunteers have learned new skills, gained experience and qualifications

Taking on a Challenge

Volunteers have challenged themselves to try something different, achieve personal goals, practice using their skills and, sometimes, discover hidden talents

Having Fun!

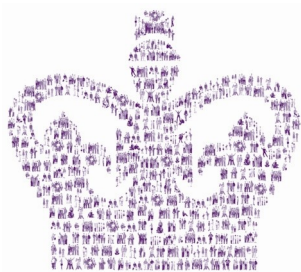
Volunteers have a great time!



Priority 2: Volunteer Development

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Our volunteer turnover has always been relatively low but we are still aiming to improve the quality of the volunteering experience by submitting an application for the Investing in Volunteers UK quality standard for organisations who involve volunteers. Our recruitment pathway, support and training ensures that we offer a quality service by fully training, committed and enthusiastic team of volunteers. The commitment made by volunteers varies over projects but, on average, each volunteer dedicates 66 hours per year / 5 hours a month supporting vulnerable groups and/or individuals. All of our volunteers have access to good quality training and support – with nearly 1420 hours spent learning something on courses. Last year over 30% of our volunteers left to undertake either additional caring roles or start a new job and we consider that to be a very positive outcome for volunteers as well as to the organisation.



**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**



RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

The volunteer team at Healthy Valleys has had another successful 12 months. At the beginning of the year our existing Volunteer Friendly status was renewed by VASLan.



Healthy Valleys also won the Lanarkshire Business Excellence Award at a glittering ceremony at Motherwell Civic Centre.



At the beginning of 2018, Dr Annette Coburn, Senior Lecturer at the University of West of Scotland nominated Healthy Valleys for a Queen's Award for Voluntary Action. Following this, the Depute Lieutenant Gavin Whitefield visited staff, a Board representative and a volunteer to carry out an assessment of our volunteering activity and involvement. We were then invited to the Queen's Garden Party to celebrate achieving the highest accolade for voluntary action.

Priority 2: Volunteer Development

Anna's Story

Background

I have been volunteering for ReConnect for just over a year and most recently have been supporting Jessie - a 73-year-old lady with restricted mobility - to get out and about. Jessie had not been out of the house for some time and I have been working with her to rebuild her confidence in public places and social situations. Jessie has made great progress since we began seeing each other and now reports feeling much less lonely and isolated and more positive about the future.

Deciding to Volunteer

I was attracted to ReConnect after seeing an advert on Gumtree. My Gran is in a care home with dementia and I feel that when she was in her own house she could have had more support. I wanted to help others in a similar situation. I also wanted to go back to college to pursue a career in social care and felt this volunteering opportunity would give me valuable experience. Most importantly, for me, was the experience of being better connected to my community. I am new to the area and at times feels quite isolated myself. ReConnect helps me to be part of something and get out and about.

Expectations

The role that I have taken on with ReConnect is exactly what I thought it would be. I find my spirits lifted at the end of a visit and feel good about the fact that I am making a difference.

Impact

Since volunteering for ReConnect, my confidence has increased and I am getting out and about by myself much more than I would have been if I had not been volunteering. Supporting Jessie has helped me with my own anxieties. I have started a college course and have been able use my volunteering role as part of my coursework - giving me valuable hands on experience.

Since volunteering with ReConnect I feel I am interacting more positively with older generations. I've gained a better understanding of older age groups and realise that they face the same social hierarchies and difficulties that everyone else does- age isn't relevant! I have a bigger appreciation of the importance of social interaction in people's lives and what a massive difference just getting out makes to people.

Challenges

The most challenging part of my role is maintaining boundaries with vulnerable older people. It is so important to build a helping relationship but at the same time keep them at arm's length as we do not want them to become dependent on us - we want them to eventually become independent.

Improvements

If I could make any improvements to ReConnect, it would be to increase the length of time we can offer support and also to consider offering a befriending type element to the project - for people who would struggle to ever become socially independent.

Priority 3: Organisational Development & Sustainability

Organisational Review

The Board of Directors play a pivotal role to ensure that the Organisation is not exposed to adverse risk and sufficient funds are in place to achieve the Priorities contained within this report. This year, the Board conducted an Organisational Review to ensure we continue to progress in the right strategic direction, have strong governance and have adequate financial resources in place to deliver our key priorities. This has resulted in a staffing restructure and a quest to find financial support to begin the change process. In the meantime, Healthy Valleys continues to work towards its Organisational Priorities at the same time as pursuing operational development programmes.

Staff, volunteers and beneficiaries have welcomed the establishment of the Community Hub at the former Lockhart Hospital in Lanark. Working in partnership with South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care colleagues has indeed strengthened the local infrastructure and increased access and opportunity to improve health and well being. The Board is still committed to working with our partners to create a Rural Centre for Children and Families.

Rewards and Recognition

Healthy Valleys was rewarded for its work and determination to making a difference in rural South Lanarkshire and won Lanarkshire’s Business Excellence Community Impact Award.

Partnership Working

Partnership working is key to any successful organisation. Healthy Valleys cannot and does not work in isolation but continues to develop and build new working relationships for the benefit of the wider community. This approach brings its own challenges but with the skills and experience within the team we manage to achieve more collectively than we would as a single operation.

Transport

Recognising transport is an issue in the rural area, we still intend to purchase or lease a suitable vehicle which will reduce barriers to community engagement and participation. However, safe storage and maintenance continues to be a challenge. When these matters are resolved this work priority will be taken forward.

Staff Development and Training

In addition to 1:1 support and supervision sessions, each staff member has a personal development plan. Board members also undertake training and development opportunities.

Some of the training undertaken this year includes:

Active Play Training	Baby & Child First Aid	Equality & Diversity
Write to Recovery Facilitator	Telephone & Reception skills	Adult Support & Protection
Child Protection	Emergency First Aid	Mental Health First Aid
REHIS Food Hygiene	Managing Conflict	REHIS Food & Health
Walk Leader	Mindfulness	Play Champions
Incredible Years	Level 3 Smoking Cessation Treatment and Research Programme	

Priority 4: Social Enterprise

Valley Catering

Although we have parked the development of Valley Catering as a social enterprise activity, we have taken steps to develop the Cooking and Training Academy and will continue to do this in the following year.



Funders

Acknowledgement and much appreciation is expressed to the following funders:

- BIG Lottery Fund
- NHS Lanarkshire
- South Lanarkshire's Integrated Care Fund
- Scottish Government: People & Communities Fund
- The Cattanach Trust
- Children in Need
- Community Food & Health (Scotland)
- Inspiring Scotland

Grateful thanks also to all individuals who have given personal donations throughout the year and to South Lanarkshire's Community Pay Back Unpaid Work Team for laying a pathway to Lanark Loch.



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