



**Connecting
with our
communities**
Our impact 2023-24

Mental health equality in all our communities



We will continue to focus on equity, diversity and inclusion – particularly in terms of increasing our reach into the diverse communities we serve. We have built on our partnerships and continued to develop models of delivery which are close to where people live. This is incredibly important to us given the ever-widening health inequalities.

■ Kim Shutler MBE, CEO



Healthy life expectancy

Bradford has some of the highest levels of deprivation and ethnic diversity in England, as well as high levels of morbidity and mortality across the lifespan compared to England averages.
(Born in Bradford, Bradford Inequalities Research Unit)

According to the Office of National Statistics there is a 10 to 20 year difference in Healthy Life Expectancy between some of our communities

Our objective is to improve our reach and engagement across our diverse communities, remove barriers to accessing support, deliver services that meet the needs of our diverse local population and play a key role in tackling widening health inequalities



It's not just about how long people live, it's how well they live too. If we take away the time people are living with poor mental well-being and ill health - we get what is known as Healthy Life Expectancy.



■ Closing the health gap in central Bradford, Reducing Inequalities in Communities



It has been absolutely amazing having the Peer Support groups in 2023. It has made a great impact on many Roma community members who have gladly spread the word and therefore had a greater impact on the Roma communities outlook/behaviour towards mental health and well-being services, and overall.



■ Daniel Balaz, Director,
Connecting Roma

The Peer support model



162 people supported



5 grassroots organisations

In 2023–24 The Cellar Trust worked in collaboration with five community organisations to embed a mental health and well-being within our communities using a peer support model.

Working alongside colleagues at Connecting Roma, The Girlington Centre, New Libya Society, The Good Shepherd and Karmand Centre, we provided accredited peer support training to establish peer support groups for the local communities. The groups are designed and tailored to the needs of the different communities and have had huge impact on individuals and their families.

The model

- Level 3 peer support training
- Coproduction of course materials
- Training through demonstration.
- Further refinement and coproduction.

Coproduction

- Delivered in different languages.
- Delivered in a culturally competent way.
- Delivered by known staff.
- Input from The Cellar Trust as and when required.
- Flexibility to adapt the materials and delivery style to meet the needs of the attendees.
- Flexibility with days and timings.

The result: Sustainable mental health support in our communities

- The development of “experts by experience”
- Participants became peer support workers within new groups, building skills and capacity at these small grassroots organisations.
- Some organisations have paid to put their community members through the peer support training to sustain the work long after we leave.
- The people themselves are building the foundations for mental health peer support work within their communities.
- They’ve been sharing examples of their good practice with us.



Connecting Roma

Connecting Roma is a community organisation in the heart of Bradford that works with the Roma and Eastern European community. This project enabled the community to begin discussions around mental health and the impact that this has on other aspects of their lives.



33 people supported



Average 46% improvement in well-being scores

Alex's story

I came to the UK in 2013 as a single parent with my daughter. In Czech Republic where I was from, I led a good quality life but unfortunately my wife left me and my daughter. I was forced to leave my country and came to live in the UK to find a better life for us.

My experience of coming to the UK was one the worst decisions I made in my life. I had low mood and could not function or lead a normal life. I struggled with English Language, lacked confidence, had no support network, no hobbies and was unaware of my local amenities and the opportunities in Bradford. Despite this I had to provide the best care and upbringing to my daughter who is striving in her life but I had become very isolated, anxious and depressed. I worked all my life in the Czech Republic and since coming to the UK I haven't been able to get into a full-time employment. I hated my life and didn't know how to fit in the community.

Being part of a Peer Support Group has massively changed my outlook on the UK, my life and my future. I shared my life experiences, and my coping mechanisms with the others in the group. I was focused on all sessions especially when others were sharing their experiences. I listened to the other people in the group and implemented changes in my daily routine.

I have absolutely enjoyed my time with the group, and I have asked if I can carry on attending the next cohorts so I can volunteer as an extra support. I am now planning my future and want to get into ESOL to better my English Language and get into further training so I can get a good full time job. I have gained confidence and have been motivated through this programme. I have gained a drive to better my life, employment chances and I'm eager to get to know the UK. I cannot believe how beautiful England is, especially here in Yorkshire, I just knew BD8 and BD9 and I really thought that's it, that's all there is. I am amazed how many different businesses are here, Heritage sites, different cultures etc I've even been to Leeds now for the first time, my daughter took me and wow I was shocked how big and expensive the City is, I loved it.



The Good Shepherd

The Good Shepherd Centre is a charitable organisation that offers a variety of services to support new arrivals to Keighley and the surrounding area, ranging from English language lessons, health advice, immigration advice and advocacy to practical assistance with clothing and furniture, and pastoral support. The centre supports local families and asylum seekers, refugees from central Eastern Europe and immigrants from other parts of the world.



45 people supported



Average 46% improvement in well-being scores

Anthony's story

Anthony, a second language English speaker sought help from our well-being support group at The Good Shepherd Centre.

He was suffering from depression, exacerbated by marital breakdown and disruptive behaviour from anti-social neighbours. Their constant noise intensified his feelings of despair and isolation. His struggles included emotional vulnerability from his failed marriage and distress from his neighbours' antagonistic behaviour, trapping him in negativity.

During our group sessions, he became more positive, he made friends and was eventually able to offer advice to others. During one session he declared that;

"This is my happy place, I know I have friends here, I have never had a place where I can talk about my feelings before."

The group proved transformative for Anthony. He attended a total of 12 sessions. With support, he addressed the noise disturbances and gained coping strategies. Additional technological support was given when he needed to contact his housing provider to request rehousing by email.

He returned for a second series of sessions. He was able to contact us at times of crisis safe in the knowledge that everything was confidential and eventually felt empowered enough to leave the group confident in his mental well-being. The group assured him of a welcome return if needed.



The Girdlington Centre

The Girdlington Centre works towards the prevention and relief of poverty in Girdlington and the surrounding area by providing services to individuals in need. The centre provides a community resource for the people of Bradford and serves individuals of all ages and community groups to access advice, advocacy, information, education, training, social and leisure opportunities. The peer support groups, set up in partnership with The Cellar Trust offered weekly mental health support to the South Asian men's and women's groups.



32 people supported



Average 29% improvement in well-being scores

Meera's story

Meera was struggling with depression, while her married daughter was experiencing postnatal depression. Both lacked support prompting Meera to join a peer support group seeking solace and understanding.

Her decision to join the peer support group proved to be a turning point. She found comfort in sharing her experiences with others facing similar challenges. During one of the sessions, Meera received a handout about coping mechanisms and resources for managing depression.

Empowered by the group's support, she decided to share the handout with her daughter, unaware of her daughter's own struggles with postnatal depression. To their surprise, they discovered they were both facing similar battles. This brought them closer together, fostering a newfound bond of understanding and empathy.

Through mutual support and shared experiences, both Meera and her daughter embarked on a journey of recovery together. Their relationship blossomed as they openly communicated and exchanged coping strategies, and provided unwavering support to each other.

This case highlights the transformative power of peer support groups in facilitating healing and resilience. By fostering connections and promoting open dialogue, individuals can find strength in shared experiences, ultimately overcoming adversity and forging deeper relationships.

Meera and her daughter's story exemplifies the profound impact of mutual support in navigating the complexities of mental health challenges within familial relationships.



Reflecting on my journey with The Cellar Trust, I am compelled to share the profound impact that they have had on my life and the lives of other. Thanks to the exceptional training I received, I've been able to make a meaningful impact in my community. Completing the level 3 peer support training equipped me with the skills and knowledge to effectively facilitate support groups. Now, as I conduct three groups at Girlington Centre, I witness first-hand the positive transformations and support that participants experience. I owe a debt of gratitude to The Cellar Trust for their comprehensive training program, which not only expanded my understanding of mental health but also empowered me to create a nurturing environment where individuals can thrive. The feedback I've received from participants reflects the high quality and effectiveness of the training. I am proud to be associated with The Cellar Trust and honoured to contribute to their mission of promoting mental well-being in our community. Thank you, for your invaluable support and guidance.

■ Uzma Khan, Peer support worker at The Girlington Centre





New Libya Society

New Libya Society is an organisation that aims to help the Libyan community in Bradford and surrounding area in education, sharing culture, volunteering and sports. Working in partnership with The Cellar Trust, New Libya Society were able to create peer support groups for their community and begin to discuss mental health.



29 people supported



Average 43% improvement in well-being scores



I would thank you for the opportunity you gave us to participate in the wellbeing course. The time when we were participating and attending the course, thousands of Libyan people were encountering a very difficult time losing properties and families during the incident/flooding. The ideas we discussed to support our people and the positive discussions made us feel relieved, as a result it changed all our mood and kept us feeling motivated in our lives. Finally, I would like to thank Mr Ebrahim, our leader, for organising such a great course. Looking forward to more activities.

■ Ahmed Mazen

I wanted to take a moment to express my gratitude for the incredible experience I had while participating in the well-being course. One aspect that stood out to me was the interactive nature of the course. The discussions and activities fostered a sense of community among participants, creating a supportive environment for personal growth. Thank you again for creating a course that genuinely makes a positive impact in my life.

■ Musab Alhawwat



Karmand Centre

Karmand Community Centre is a vibrant multi-purpose, multi faith, multi-cultural community organisation, providing a wide range of services and opportunities for local people of all ages - from pre-school activities, youth projects, support for older people, Sports and leisure activities, volunteering and 'on the job' training placements.



23 people supported



Average 19% improvement in well-being scores

Karmand Community Centre has been serving the community for nearly 35 years, having been set up as a community Centre. It is a locally managed charity that continues to provide support and opportunities for those facing disadvantage and social exclusion.

This project involved raising awareness around mental health and breaking down stigma amongst the elderly South Asian men's and women's groups.





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