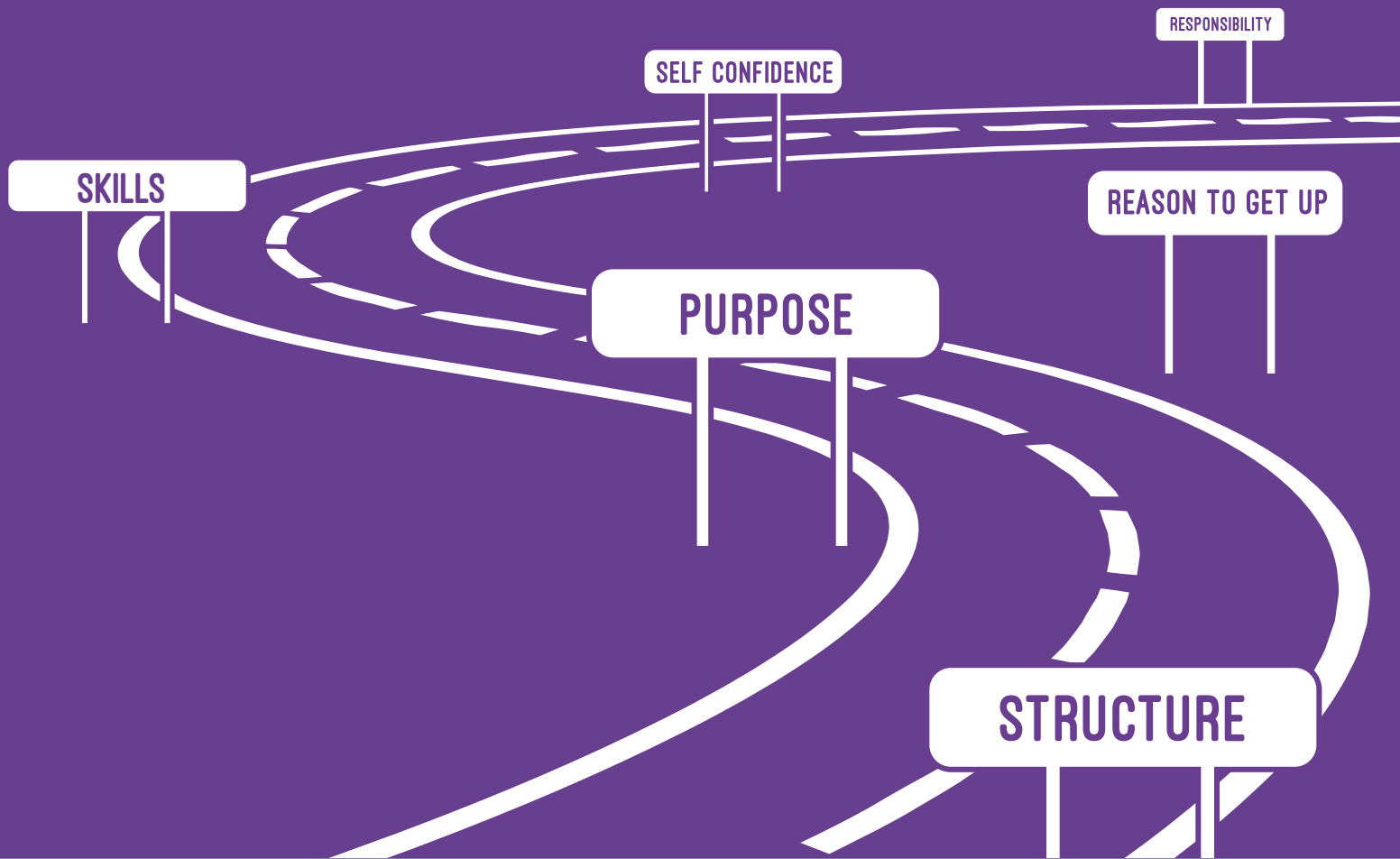


HEADSUP **FINAL REPORT**

Delivering an **employment support** project for people with common mental health problems



CONTENT

Introduction	3
Project Outcomes	4
Our Participants	5
Context of Delivery	6
Delivery Structure	7
Participant Journey	8
Recruiting Participants	9
Participant Recruitment During Covid	11
Focus on Peer Support Workers	13
The Impact of Peer Support Work	14
Practical Employability Skills	15
Wellbeing and Emotional Resilience Workshops	16
Impact of Participant Wellbeing	17
SROI	18
Participant Case Studies	20
Impacts That Can't be Measured	22
Ending HeadsUp	23
Conclusion	24

INTRODUCTION

HeadsUp was developed to address unmet need in primary care/statutory employment provision and supported people deemed ‘fit for work’ but suffering with anxiety, depression or low confidence and self-esteem (common mental health problems). Participants were unemployed or economically inactive but wishing to take steps towards employment, training, or education.

Following our successful application, we were initially awarded £1,787,100 and launched HeadsUp in 2017, funded to run until 2020. Our focus was on members of our community in Essex, Southend and Thurrock, who were struggling to find employment, education or training but were also tackling issues impacting their mental health and wellbeing. We knew that such challenges present significant barriers to taking positive steps to improve lives.

Our holistic approach to supporting participants included a peer support model with a person centred, goal orientated focus to build resilience and improve wellbeing, combined with practical skill development. Feedback through the lifetime of the project has shown that this approach has been the centrepin to the successful outcomes we have seen for our participants.

We were keen to understand the impact of our approach to delivering employment and wellbeing support so developed robust monitoring tools which were implemented from the very start.

SUPPORT MODEL



We were subsequently successful in receiving 2 further tranches raising overall funding to £3.5 million, enabling us to deliver HeadsUp for 6 years until delivery stopped in December 2022. Over the past 6 years our service has been agile to respond to local needs which included adapting our delivery model to continue supporting existing participants, and enrolling new, throughout the Covid pandemic when anxiety and isolation was heightened for so many.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

1030 PEOPLE ENROLLED

490 **124** exited into training and education
EXITS of which **201** exited into employment

Of the **555** economically inactive people that enrolled,
247 of them moved in employment, education, training or job search on leaving.

DSOs



Of which:

- Were about CV writing
- Interview Skills
- Deciding your direction
- IT skills for job search
- Other

RECOGNITION



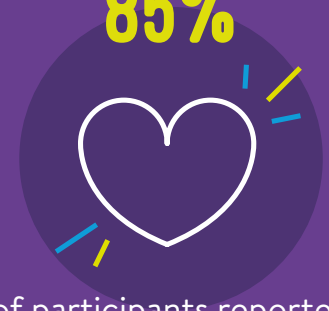
HSJ VALUE AWARDS 2019
PRIMARY CARE INITIATIVE OF THE YEAR - HIGHLY COMMENDED

FESTIVAL OF LEARNING
CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT
2020 & 2021

HeadsUp Final Report

PARTICIPANT WELLBEING

85%



of participants reported an **improvement** in their overall wellbeing



Life satisfaction scores **doubled** upon leaving the project

90%



of participants felt more **in control** after attending a workshop

OUR PARTICIPANTS



473

were unemployed



555

were economically inactive

640

Had disabilities

533

Women

494

Men

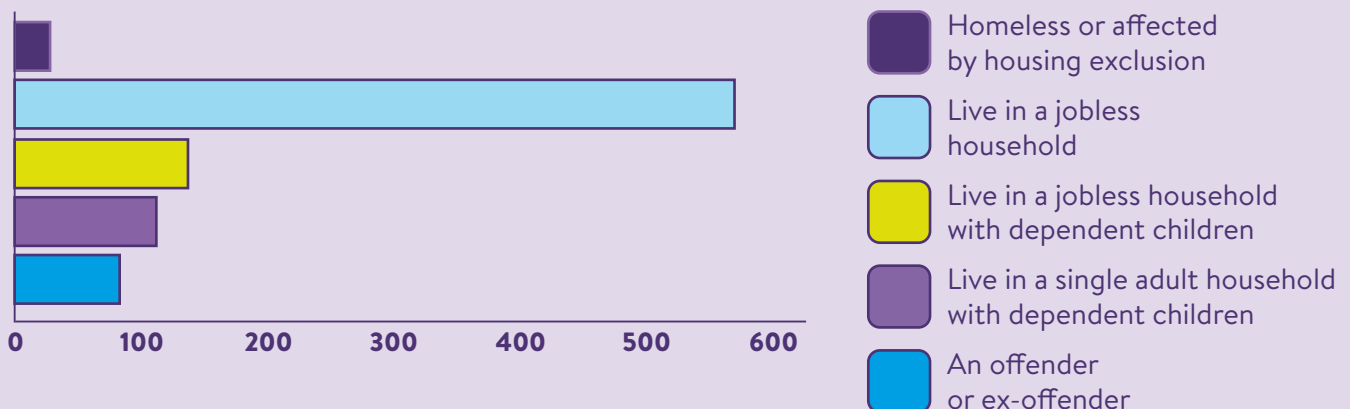
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Over 50

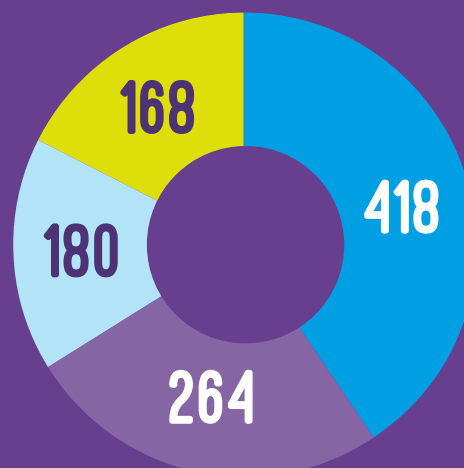
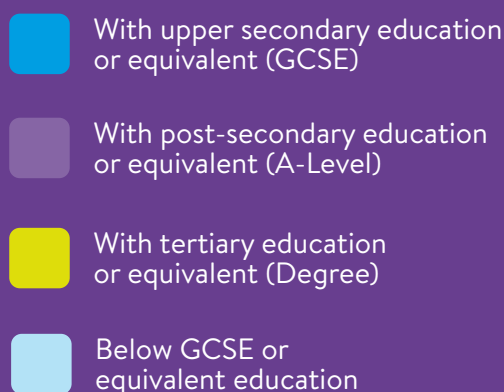
78

Ethnic minority

PARTICIPANTS LIVING CIRCUMSTANCES



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF PARTICIPANTS



CONTEXT OF DELIVERY

Wrapped around the development and subsequent delivery of HeadsUp was the funding and compliance structure within which the project sat, and the impact of the national landscape in which we were delivering. Both presented significant challenges along the way, but for each that arose we found appropriate solutions which is testament to the team in situ. This report shares some of the ways that delivery evolved, with changes to staffing and delivery methods when participant behaviours, or project demands required.

The administration, financial, branding and reporting requirements for our BBO project were significant due to the European Social Fund (ESF) element of the funding which requires robust compliance and reporting processes. Indeed, these produced the most regular issues presented by our delivery partners who found it challenging providing all that was required for compliance purposes whilst delivering the operational part of the project.

Our finance officer developed a plethora of processes to ensure that HeadsUp fulfilled its financial and compliance responsibilities, but it became apparent that a dedicated compliance role was also needed to ensure we met our funders requirements. These collective efforts have ensured that we have delivered on all tasks associated with reporting and auditing activity.

A big (and very positive) adaptation was in response to the award of two extensions to our funding, bringing the overall grant funding to a significant investment of over £3.5m. Originally due to finish in 2020, the additional funds allowed us to keep applying what we had learnt thus far and provide even more participants with employment support.



Initial fund for delivery was £1,787,100 for 2017-2020.



We were awarded extension funding of £1,218,000 to continue in 2020/2021.



A second extension of £587,787.40 to continue in 2022.

DELIVERY STRUCTURE

HeadsUp is led by Enable East, part of Essex Partnerships University NHS Foundation Trust, which is a mental health trust. Responsibility for overall project management, finance and compliance, communications, evaluation and providing practical skills sessions for participants, sat centrally within the Enable East team.

A project partnership of NHS and voluntary sector organisations across Essex, Southend, and Thurrock provided our local delivery of face-to-face activity with participants. Our partners were EPUT Employment Services, EmployAbility and Signpost. The success of HeadsUp fell to everyone in these teams working collectively to meet our project objectives and the delivery model provided a framework for all involved to do just that.

“ The experience of being a delivery partner has been very positive and I think **there has been a real sense of being united with the other delivery partners** - something that I think can be quite difficult to achieve. ”

Sara Kulikowski - Signpost Coordinator

“ It needs a good lead organisation to co-ordinate this model of working and Enable East have certainly fulfilled this role. The overall result is that there is something to be learnt from every partner in the supply chain and it is **this collective strength that adds far more value** than a disconnected set of individual organisations doing the same role. ”

Darren Connew - Head of Service, EmployAbility

Research showed that providing an opportunity to share experiences could help build trust between our future delivery teams and participants. A Peer Support approach offered this opportunity, and we developed a model that centred around Peer Support Workers (PSWs) with lived experience of common mental health problems themselves, supporting our potential participants and being a role model of how to move forwards. Indeed, this approach is what set HeadsUp apart from any other employment support project.

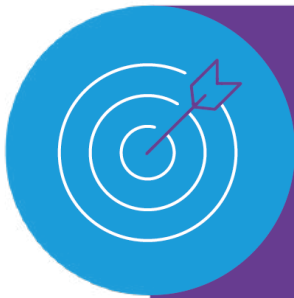
A flexible delivery model was required with both practical and emotional support available to our participants, in a volume appropriate for their needs and enabling us to provide a bespoke service to our participants. In addition, we also worked with participants on developing practical skills such as CV writing, IT skills and interview techniques, along with workshops focussing on emotional wellbeing and building resilience.

HEADSUP PARTICIPANT JOURNEY



Participant enrolls onto HeadsUp

Participant meets with coordinator to find out what their needs are.



Peer Support and Goal Setting

Participant is allocated PSW, who helps identify goals and aspirations.



Wellbeing Support & Practical Skills Development

Participant attends workshop learning resilience tools, and works with Skills Officers on CV, IT, Applications, and Interviews.



Participant exits the project

Supported into employment, education, training or able to job search independently (no longer economically inactive).

RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

When developing HeadsUp we were aware that one of the biggest challenges we might face would be reaching and engaging our target audience. Whilst self-referral to HeadsUp was welcomed, we knew that enrolments would largely rely upon referrals from relevant organisations who had identified people who would most benefit from the targeted support on offer. Organisations such as Job Centre Plus, Mind, NHS groups such as IAPT services and a breadth of social prescribing networks became regular referrers during the project.

To build the relationships needed to underpin a consistent referral network a broad approach to communications was required. Our plan included the development of a website, social media channels and a suite of hard copy and digital materials. Whilst progress was made, in late 2018 it became obvious that HeadsUp needed a dedicated stakeholder resource to increase momentum and more speedily encourage enrolments if we were to meet targets. A new role, Stakeholder Engagement Coordinator (SEC) subsequently joined the team, to work alongside the Communications Manager.



Sharing information at events

“

I'M GETTING REALLY GOOD FEEDBACK FROM MY CLIENTS ABOUT YOUR SERVICE AND YOUR ADVISORS. PLEASE CAN YOU LET THEM KNOW THEY'RE DOING A GREAT JOB IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES.

PENNY BELL - STAR WORKER, MID AND NORTH EAST ESSEX MIND

”

This additional resource allowed attendance at networking and information events across the region, raising the profile of HeadsUp. Creation of our own stakeholder database enabled direct communication with this group. 2257 contacts were made since 2018, allowing consistent digital communications on key messages and project information to be easily shared.

Collective team efforts in communications and profile-raising activity had a significant impact on project referrals and ultimately enrolments. HeadsUp exceeded its overall enrolment target of 984 by the end of the project.

“

CONGRATULATIONS ON DELIVERING SUCH BRILLIANT SERVICES.

AUDREY CLARK - ESSEX COMMUNITY TREE (LEAD)

”

REGULAR ESHOTS SENT TO OUR STAKEHOLDERS

SMILES AND TESTIMONIALS

We love working with a whole variety of organisations across Essex, Southend and Thurrock who refer people to us for our employment support. Our participants experience feelings such as anxiety or low mood but we offer the opportunity to develop practical and emotional skills so that such feelings don't become a barrier to seeking work or returning to education.



Those who refer to us have told us that we are doing a good job and we're proud to share some of this feedback with you.

"I just wanted to say thank you to your team. They have been a beam of hopeful sunshine during the lockdown. Being the sole NEET worker in our service, having the option to signpost/refer some of my young people to your team has been reassuring. I know the skills and know them in the best way possible."

Liz Digby – The Children's Choices NEET Co-ordinator

"Congratulations on delivering such brilliant services"

Audrey Clark – Essex Community Tree (Lead)

"I'm getting really good feedback from my participants"

THE IMPACT OF OUR PEER SUPPORT WORKERS



Every participant who joins our employment support project works with a dedicated PSW on a 1:2:1 basis. Our participants are all facing challenges with things such as anxiety, depression or low confidence which present as a barrier to seeking work or training. Our PSW's also have lived experience of these things but are further along their journey in finding ways to cope with such challenges, and subsequently found employment themselves.

The lived experience of our Peer Support Workers is fundamental to the success we have seen in our work.

Feedback from 2 of our participants makes this very clear;

"Knowing someone else has been where you are and come out of the other side is priceless. You feel so hopeless standing in a dark tunnel and having someone who has been there who knows the way is absolutely priceless."

"I feel I can be open and honest with her about everything. She listens and offers advice and is never judgemental. I messaged her today as was feeling a bit low and she called me (out of our arranged appointment times). This kindness and genuineness is very hard to come across."



Please get in touch

To find out more

ENABLEEAST.ORG.UK

HeadsUp is funded by the



Please get in touch if you would like to refer someone to us!

To find out more please check out our website:

ENABLEEAST.ORG.UK/HEADSUP

Facebook: /HeadsUpEssex
Twitter: @HeadsUpEssex
Email: headsup@enableeast.org.uk

HeadsUp is funded by the European Social Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund.



PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT DURING COVID

Covid presented everyone with probably the biggest challenge of a lifetime, for a huge variety of reasons. For our project supporting people with common mental health problems, taking steps towards employment at a time when everyone's mental health was challenged, and the working world was essentially closed, seemed a bit of an impossible task.

The arrival of the global pandemic saw the end of our ability to deliver face to face activity. We had to identify another way to offer our service to a population who needed such support more than ever.

And, with input from the whole team, we managed to continue to offer our service. Our 1:1 support was offered largely by telephone, and our Skills Pods moved to a mix of phone and online provision. We created a series of short films about practical employability skills and developed the subject matter to reflect the new employment world that had emerged i.e. online applications and interview practice.

In April 2020 an emergency communications plan was put in place to share news of our changes in delivery of the project. We even continued to [safely] enrol new participants throughout the whole covid period.

Lockdown also shone a light on the prevalence of digital exclusion and the impact that this can have on those wishing to seek employment. In response we provided appropriate and Covid safe support so that participants could learn how to use a variety of online tools and communicate via Teams. We also provided tablets funded by Essex County Council and paid for dongles to allow internet access.

“ I just wanted to say thank you to your team. They have been a beam of hopeful sunshine during the lockdown. Being the sole NEET worker in our service, **having the option to signpost/refer some of my young people to your team has been reassuring.** I know your team have the skills and knowledge to support them in the best way possible. ”

**Liz Digby - The Children's Society,
CHOICES NEET Coordinator**

The project's administrative approach also had to change, with team members needing to identify new ways to gather participant eligibility evidence, and financial evidence for our quarterly reports for our funders.

The National Lottery Community Fund shared our emergency communications plan across the national network of projects as an example of good practice.

ONGOING COMMUNICATIONS DURING LOCKDOWN

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT CONTINUES DURING LOCKDOWN

HeadsUp have adapted delivery methods so that we can continue to safely offer support to people across Essex, Southend and Thurrock – **and we are enrolling now so please do refer potential participants to us.**



We can offer the following by phone, facetime or other digital means;



1:1 support from our Peer Support Workers



Live Wellbeing and Confidence Building workshops



Pre-recorded Resilience and Confidence Building films



Pre-recorded films Job Seeking skills

To find out more

ENABLEEAST.ORG

[/HeadsUpEssex](https://www.facebook.com/HeadsUpEssex)
HeadsUp is funded by the



ONGOING WELLBEING, RESILIENCE AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING SUPPORT

There may be a necessary void in the provision of face to face support for our participants but we're never ones to shy away from finding a solution to a problem. The HeadsUp team have developed a series of short films so that we can still offer our participants the skills development normally accessed by attending our HeadsUp workshops.



Along with practical job seeking skills, it's vital to develop these personal skills to make sure our participants feel ready and able to start looking for the right job or training course, writing strong applications and attending interviews when the opportunities arise.

Click here to see films on the following subjects:

- | 6 Keys to Resilience
- | 3 Methods of Mindfulness
- | Selfcare
- | How to Build Resilience and Wellbeing

HeadsUp supports people who have experienced common mental health problems such as anxiety, low self confidence and depression. If you know someone who might benefit from working with us, please refer them.

To find out more please check out our website

ENABLEEAST.ORG.UK/HEADSUP

[/HeadsUpEssex](https://www.facebook.com/HeadsUpEssex) | [@HeadsUpEssex](https://www.instagram.com/HeadsUpEssex) | headsup@enableeast.org.uk

HeadsUp is funded by the European Social Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund



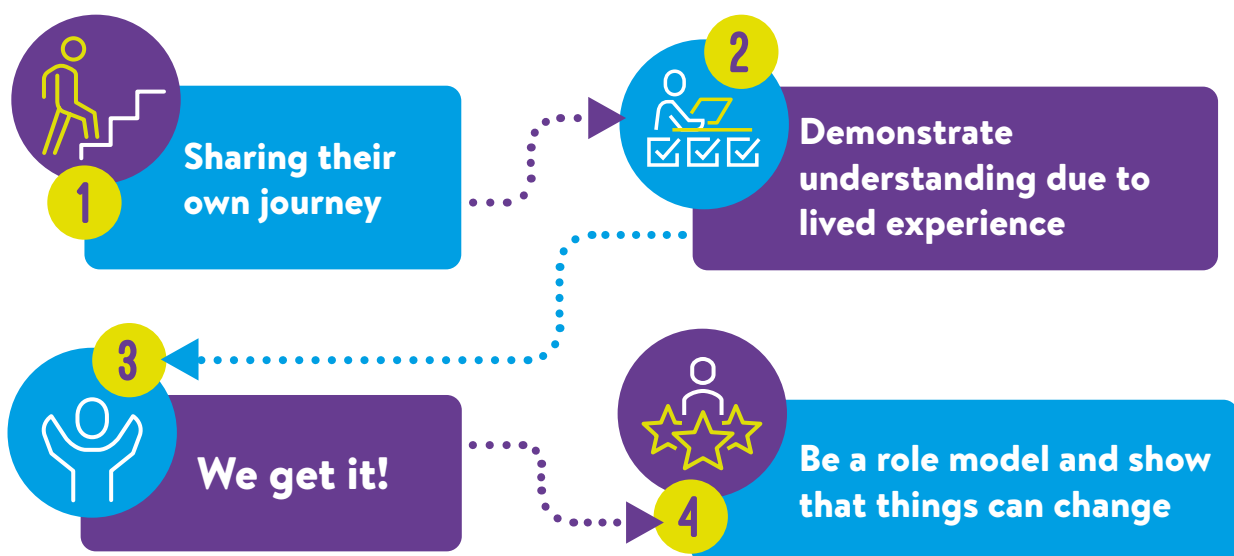
FOCUS ON PEER SUPPORT WORKERS

In developing our PSW support model in 2017, research identified several respected existing models and best practise. We incorporated recommendations and experiences shared in ImROC (Implementing Recovery through Organisational Change) papers' 'Theory and Practice of Peer Support Workers' and 'A Practical Guide to Implementation' in our own delivery framework, following the 8 core principles of these respected papers.

Our team of PSWs each have their own lived experiences of mental health and unemployment bringing an important wealth of experience to the role. The uniqueness of each of their journeys along with their compassion, empathy, resilience, listening and care when working with participants, provides a positive environment impossible to offer without PSW involvement. It's inevitable that the focus of each PSW/ participant relationship is completely unique based around the perceived and real challenges faced by each participant. Whilst the HeadsUp model is goal orientated these goals are very much bespoke to the individual so the depth of work undertaken and the length of time that a PSW, and other members of the delivery team might work with a participant, is entirely dependent on need.

All participants suffer from one or more common mental health problem such as anxiety, low self-esteem or confidence and depression. The shared recognition of the impact of these on the participants themselves and their wider lives, is invaluable. Our PSWs know how important it is that they understand what participants are talking about (especially when trying to describe some of the effects of depression/ anxiety). This can make the difference between being able to move forward with their lives or not.

KEYS TO PSW IMPACT



THE IMPACT OF PEER SUPPORT WORK

The true voice of the impact of our PSWs is that of the participant, and the strength of this voice is consistently evidenced in the feedback of the hundreds of participants who have worked with us to date. There is a great sense of non-judgement which gives our participants the confidence to share their concerns and anxieties with PSWs, along with discussing their progress and employment goals.

One of our participants Suzanne, explained how hearing about someone's lived experiences and challenges and then seeing their career and achievements, gives those in similar situations hope. Suzanne went on to explain how those who have not had a personal experience of mental health problems can empathise but can never truly understand, whereas our HeadsUp Peer Support Workers can both empathise and understand.



SUZANNE

Suzanne's confidence has grown, and she is now volunteering as a receptionist and has a Saturday job in a Barbers, which involves meeting and greeting people. She is quite rightly proud of these achievements as she has come a long way from where she was. She is now able to talk to people face to face and make conversation, accomplishments that are "pretty special".

“

IF IT WASN'T FOR MY PSW I WOULDN'T BE WHERE I AM. I HAVE SO MUCH RESPECT AND ADMIRATION FOR HER. FINDING SOMEONE THAT HAS BEEN THROUGH SIMILAR SITUATIONS GIVES YOU HOPE... AND A GLIMMER AT THE END OF A VERY LONG TUNNEL.

”

“

KNOWING SOMEONE ELSE HAS BEEN WHERE YOU ARE AND COME OUT OF THE OTHER SIDE IS PRICELESS. YOU FEEL SO HOPELESS STANDING IN A DARK TUNNEL AND HAVING SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN THERE WHO KNOWS THE WAY IS ABSOLUTELY PRICELESS.

”

PRACTICAL EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

The development of employability skills was initially planned via direct employer activities such as work visit days and employer led mock interviews. However, once the project started it was apparent that our participants often had poorer mental health than anticipated, often needing much more wellbeing and resilience support. This made it difficult to plan engagement with employers and be confident that participants would be well enough to attend activity once arranged. Whilst positive activity did take place such as an employer information event and workplace visits, this approach was revisited in planning for our first extension period in 2020.

“ HeadsUp gave fantastic advice regarding my CV and also planning for my upcoming interviews. ”

The role of Development and Skills Officer (DSO) was created by merging the existing Stakeholder Engagement Coordinator and Employer Engagement Manager. This allowed the required focus at this stage of the project and supported PSWs to move participants through the support model.

‘Skill Pods’ were designed to develop participants’ practical job seeking skills including CV Skills, Cover Letters, Job Searching skills, Online Applications, Interview Techniques, and basic IT Skills. Whilst the initial plan was a combination of group and 1:1 face to face sessions, the arrival of Covid prevented this. The support was adapted to be delivered remotely, which resulted in DSOs being able to support more people with most participants preferring this option even when Covid restrictions were lifted.

“ They helped me with technology and my phone making it accessible for me. ”

In the final year of delivery there were three DSOs and a 10-week delivery model supporting both wellbeing and employability skills. This allowed engagement with as many participants as possible.

**SINCE 2020 DSOs HAVE DELIVERED OVER
1000 SKILL PODS TO 270 PARTICIPANTS.**

WELLBEING AND EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE WORKSHOPS



Workshops were designed to help participants identify skills and strategies that supported them to take steps towards starting a course or returning to work.



There have been several iterations of the workshops, from 3 full day sessions to a ‘menu’ format that allowed PSWs to help participants select a workshop of a depth and time that suited their situation. The change in format reflected that many of our participants were more poorly than had been anticipated so the original concept of a 3-day workshop was often too much.

The adaptable nature of the HeadsUp team continues to be reflected in the evolution of the workshop model and the arrival of Covid meant that all sessions had to move online. An online delivery space is a difficult place to address wellbeing and resilience themes. It’s testament to all involved that this activity has continued.

Encouraging participant attendance has been a challenge throughout as many felt daunted with the prospect of joining a session with people that they don’t know. To counter this, trainers began to call participants individually a day or so prior to the session, helping to break the ice and noticeably improving attendance numbers. We have also helped participants who were finding using technology a challenge.



**NOT BEING MADE TO FEEL STUPID OR JUDGED IS A BREATH OF FRESH AIR.
THE WORKSHOPS ARE A BRILLIANT IDEA!**



The HeadsUp workshops have helped participants by identifying what wellbeing means to the individual. Using activity such as a Wellbeing Wheel where participants are asked to score different areas of their wellbeing between 1-5 (such as emotional, physical, spiritual) and then identifying a small step they can take to move the score slightly higher. Such adaptable approaches worked well rather than trying to make big changes, allowing participants to feel in control of moving forwards.

PARTICIPANT WELLBEING OUTCOMES

Supporting participant wellbeing was a vital part of the project. Developing resilience skills and learning to maintain one's own wellbeing are an important backdrop to feeling able to take steps towards the workplace.

As part of the HeadsUp evaluation, the team carried out both the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS) and collected Office of National Statistics Wellbeing Data. Both via pre and post engagement questionnaires, essentially finding out if the work they had done with HeadsUp had a positive impact on how participants were feeling.

In both cases the outcomes were very positive, for example 85% participants reported an improvement in their overall wellbeing, and life satisfaction scores doubled upon leaving the project.

ONS Data Example

MEASURE

QUESTION



SATISFACTION

Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?



WORTHWHILE

Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?



HAPPINESS

Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?



ANXIETY

On a scale where 0 is "not at all anxious" and 10 is "completely anxious", overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?

SATISFIED: 53% OF RESPONDENTS IMPROVED THEIR CATEGORY AFTER THE PROJECT

HAPPY: 41% OF RESPONDENTS IMPROVED THEIR CATEGORY AFTER THE PROJECT

WORTHWHILE 45.5% OF RESPONDENTS IMPROVED THEIR CATEGORY AFTER THE PROJECT

ANXIOUS 27% OF RESPONDENTS IMPROVED THEIR CATEGORY AFTER THE PROJECT

*As only a proportion of participants completed both surveys it is likely that the positive outcomes here are in fact an underestimation of the impact of the project.

SOCIAL VALUE – WHAT IS IT?

Social value is a way to quantify how different interventions affect people’s lives – the overall impact on people’s wellbeing, or their quality of life. Social impact is therefore the difference made to individuals, communities, and society through programmes of work.

Social Return On Investment (SROI) has been calculated using the UK Social Value Bank 2022 which uses measures derived from national datasets which are monetised using wellbeing valuation and calculating (where applicable) net exchequer values (savings to the state). Adding wellbeing and exchequer values together gives us a combined monetary value reflecting personal wellbeing improvements and net savings to the public purse. It’s possible to break this value down further so that we can understand the impact on health, and the resulting savings to the exchequer. Once deadweight is factored in (what would have happened anyway in the absence of an intervention), the result is an overall Social Value.

FOR EXAMPLE



The move from unemployment to employment has a **Wellbeing Value**, and an **Exchequer Value**



The **Wellbeing Value** is **£11,616**

Wellbeing Value is “the amount of money that has the same impact on life satisfaction as the change measured”.

The **Exchequer Value** is **£9,844**

Exchequer value describes “the amount of money saved for the public purse” - in other words, public money that was **NOT** spent as a consequence of the intervention’s impact.



The **Total Cumulative Social Value** is **£21,460**



SOCIAL RETURN OF INVESTMENT – HEADSUP



Whilst the objective for HeadsUp was to help people into work, education or training there were very clear wider positive impacts for each participant and their family, friends and community.

The positive experience of a participant might encourage others to take action, and often a positive step in one part of an individual's life can create an openness to other opportunities. For example many of our participants were able to participate in family life in a way that they hadn't before, take their children to the park on their own, take public transport and interact with school teachers and neighbours.

Using SROI data has allowed us to evidence the impact activity has had on individuals and communities. For organisations delivering projects this approach will also help to drive informed decision making about how and where to improve services in the future, with increased positive results.



**HEADSUP CREATED A TOTAL SOCIAL VALUE OF
£2,632,635. AND FOR EVERY £1 SPENT ON THE
PROJECT, £1.59 OF SOCIAL VALUE WAS CREATED***



*It should be noted that of the 1030 participants registered, 395 reported and recorded both baseline and exit scores, therefore impact shown is likely to be an underestimate of the effectiveness of the project.

PARTICIPANT CASE STUDIES

The very best way to demonstrate the impact of the HeadsUp project is through sharing case studies from some of our participant journeys. Here are stories that show just how different the support required can be.



Catherine from Harwich, referred by Job Centre Plus

On joining HeadsUp Catherine hadn't worked for many years having left her previous role to care for her Mum who unfortunately had recently passed away. She felt quite lost, and whilst she wanted to seek employment, her confidence was very low.

“ Being with HeadsUp has **given me a lot more confidence and I am happy that somebody was taking an interest in me.** I even attended a job fair on my own and my sister noticed how much happier I had become. It's amazing what a bit of self-belief can do for you. ”

Participant success in Maldon

Debbie hadn't worked for 23 years when she joined HeadsUp and she suffered with Anxiety and OCD. She didn't have a CV and felt anxious about completing one so having someone to go through it with her step by step and offer a range of 1:1 support really helped.

She also went along to our workshops and the confidence she developed allowed her to continue to step out of her comfort zone as she joined ACL Computing and Wellbeing courses. Her friends and family started to notice a change in Debbie's confidence too and she felt proud to tell them about all the new things she was doing. Debbie went from thinking she 'could never do a full-time job' to not only finding a job, but working almost full time, this is such a massive accomplishment.



“ Since 2011 I was housebound with OCD and Anxiety, **to go from that to driving home from work is amazing.** ”



Ben accepts a helping hand with great results

In his mid-twenties, Ben had been dealing with mental health difficulties for most of his life and found himself ‘unfulfilled, without a purpose or even a reason to get up’. But from his first meeting with a HeadsUp Peer Support Worker he started to feel like he was moving forward.

Ben realised that asking for a helping hand could lead to quite extraordinary results. He was encouraged to attend a NHS Trust recruitment day and after receiving help with his application he is now (rightly) proud to have started in his first ever job as a hospital cleaner.

Ben’s journey with HeadsUp didn’t end when he started work though, with him choosing to take up the offer of In-Work Support. He’s feeling positive and fulfilled.

“ I absolutely recommend HeadsUp to anyone who feels they need that helping hand. ”

Ty moved from one successful career to another

Ty had moved from a successful career in financial services into an even more successful career as a body-builder. He was crowned Mr Universe Musclemania, was a TV host in Kuwait and developed his own fitness and motivational brand in the USA that saw him sing at The White House! But, in 2018 he became unwell, so returned to the UK and was later referred to HeadsUp.

He credits the warmth and empathy of his Peer Support Worker (PSW) with helping him to understand his own mental health. When the time was right, a new CV helped Ty appreciate his achievements. The online wellbeing workshop helped him to learn resilience tools and as part of the process he also learned to use Teams for video calls.

He’s proud to be teaching his own high-intensity training class at a local gym and knows that his mum can see a happier, healthier son. Ty has rediscovered his sense of purpose, and hopes his story will motivate others who are facing their own challenges.



“ HeadsUp seemed tailored to me; a programme that **gets your mind back and helps you get back to work.** ”

IMPACTS THAT CAN'T BE MEASURED

During HeadsUp it's been important to measure the impact of the support offered. Not only does this demonstrate the effectiveness of different activity and provide feedback to our funders, but it also ensured that we continued to evolve our support focussing on those parts that worked best for our participants.

But of course in a project such as HeadsUp there are impacts that can't really be measured. For the team, be they in a person facing role or not, the experience of working with vulnerable members of society, each with their own experiences and support needs, allowed everyone involved the privilege to understand a small part of what it might be like to walk in the shoes of others.

“

I'VE LEARNT A LOT ABOUT THE IMPACT OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH. I HAVE SUCH RESPECT FOR THE EFFORTS THAT SOME OF OUR PARTICIPANTS HAVE HAD TO MAKE TO TAKE STEPS THAT TO MANY MAY SEEM SO SIMPLE.

ENABLE EAST TEAM MEMBER

”

For participants, there are the tangible aspects of progress made that can be measured quantitatively, such as those associated with wellbeing and the outcomes into work or training. But, there are also aspects that can't be measured such as the impact that their experience has had within their families.

For example, one participant enrolled when his business had folded. He was estranged from his family and at rock bottom. A year after the support received, a team member bumped into him, and as well as volunteering he had re-established a relationship with his children and was getting support from a whole range of services, his life and those of his children, has been transformed.

HeadsUp also had a positive impact on Andrew's family.

“

IT'S BEEN THREE MONTHS SINCE JOINING THE PROJECT AND LOADS OF BRILLIANT STUFF HAS HAPPENED! I TOOK THAT FIRST STEP AND FEEL I HAVE TAKEN (AM STILL TAKING) POSITIVE STEPS FORWARD. RECENTLY I HAVE FOUND THE CONFIDENCE TO SPEAK IN GROUPS. I'VE HAD SOMETHING TO SAY AND I'VE SAID IT! THAT'S A HUGE STEP FORWARD FOR ME. I'VE ALSO TAKEN MY TWO CHILDREN OUT ON MY OWN WHICH NOT ONLY AMAZED AND SURPRISED ME, BUT MY WIFE TOO!

”



ENDING HEADSUP

The gap left at the end of HeadsUp provides huge challenges as there is no other provision that combines both employment and mental health and wellbeing support within one project. We are supporting vulnerable members of society and have become a valued resource across the county. HeadsUp has provided a focal point for organisations to refer people who need support, but don't 'fit' most employment support offers and cannot access that provided via secondary mental health provisions.

“ I know that the **HeadsUp programme provided vital support** to people that we worked with who exited their employment. A gap that is now very noticeable. ”

Neville Drysdale - Lead Employment Retention Specialist, IPS

We transitioned to a 10-week model at the start of 2022 to assist meeting targets and to manage the project close without reducing the support on offer to our participants. However, presenting a hard cut off point for such support, with no alternative option to sign post people to is both difficult to manage on behalf of our participants, but also for our team and the organisations who have come to rely on us.

We have put in place a clear communications plan so that all involved understand what's happening. We have also collated information about an array of organisations who can offer some of the different aspects of HeadsUp support.

“ I am so sorry to hear that [HeadsUp is ending]. **It will be a massive dent in provision support in Essex.** ”

Employment & Skills Adviser, Youth Service, Essex County Council

“ The effects of the project coming to an end is already seen, with an impact on people who do not have access to secondary mental health employment support, leaving a gap in resources for their participant cohort; **this will undoubtedly have an impact on mental health and wellbeing of those who can no longer access this support.** ”

Holly Cooper - IPS Team Leader

CONCLUSION

We've worked with over 1000 Economically Inactive or unemployed people in Essex. Achieving some fantastic outcomes that relate not only to formal targets to support people back into work, education/training or job search, but also in the social value that has been evidenced. Impacts have been felt by the participants themselves, but also their family, friends and the communities around them.

HeadsUp filled a gap in support services, clearly improving the health and wellbeing of those who engaged with the project. There are many examples of participants demonstrating how changing behaviours and developing resilience helps to take steps towards employment.

There is no doubt in the value of centring our model on our Peer Support Workers with their own lived experience of common mental health problems and unemployment. The feedback from all involved evidences the strength of this approach. And, working collaboratively with a number of partner organisations delivering support locally, we could provide a strong community approach.

Enable East is part of Essex Partnerships University NHS Foundation Trust, and wellbeing and positive mental health are at the core of practical delivery across all of our projects. Whilst HeadsUp has now ended, resilience and mental health still remain a huge concern in a post pandemic landscape where it's clear that people still have an increased level of financial, employment and mental health needs.

The funding for HeadsUp delivery stopped in December 2022. Enable East are experienced portfolio managers having led cross agency projects worth over £10m over the past 10 years. We continue to seek funding and identify partnership opportunities to ensure that the experience and learning achieved during HeadsUp is not lost.

