Likewise

Learning Report

Contents

Introduction

Over 5000 additional hours of support have been delivered in the last year (May 21 – May 22) compared to the previous period. Within this growth is challenge and opportunity, both of which have been felt greatly across the organisation and the community in equal measures. We have seen our partnership working being further cemented throughout different services and areas in Camden, new clients engaging with our 1-1 and community work and have begun to change the fundamental way our work and support is organised.

This is an exciting moment for our organisation as we expand the potential impact we can have on the broader mental health system within Camden; however, this is not without its challenges. Across my conversations with staff, a central theme that appeared is that holding on to our unique values as a support service whilst working alongside and withing other organisational cultures and bureaucracies is difficult. As we further integrate into the rest of Camden, it is seen as pivotal that our value system that is central to our work and organisation continues to thrive.

"There is a risk we get swallowed up by larger systems"

To contribute to the learnings for this report, I have conducted interviews with both staff and clients over the last month, to gauge their thoughts and experiences on working for or with Likewise. As mentioned, one of the key themes of these conversations was how central our values are to our work and how they shape every aspect of what our support looks like. Other key themes included boundary setting in client work, upholding boundaries in the work, and integrating ourselves into the local community.

CONTEXT FOR THE REPORT

However, it is first important to establish some context around this report and our use of the community fund in the last year.

When we initially applied for and received funding from the Community Fund this was to support a particular model of service delivery called the Pod Model. This model saw relationships with clients held by pod leaders who worked across multiple services. Working alongside each pod leader were support workers and placement students providing regular support across all our services. The fundamental idea behind this model was that it would help us deliver better, more human, and relational one to one support, that was scalable and income generating. The challenges and necessary evolution of this model have been covered in previous reports.

Over the last 18 months we have been evolving the model through a variety of means. We have been diversifying the referral sources, contract types and associated income mix within each pod. Through doing this we have found that with the differences in clients, partners and contracts it has made more sense to create some bespoke teams to deliver our services. As part of this we are embracing partnership working with the likes of the NHS, Camden Council and Mind. As part of this change, we are no longer viewing ourselves as an island within Camden services, we are rather trying to actively enter other spaces and bring our culture and values with us.

Whilst this means our service delivery will be structurally different, the values and aims behind the pod model and the new structure are fundamentally the same. We remain dedicated to being human in our work,

delivering radically person-centred services, with co-learning, belonging and acceptance at its heart. If one of our overarching goals is system change, then we now believe that the most positive impact is possible through working within the system itself. We are now able to be in the important conversations with actors who have the power to make a difference.

As Likewise's new Research, Learning, and Evaluation Lead (since June 2022), I have been learning about the organisation myself through the process of writing this. I hope to provide a unique and fresh perspective on our work and services, but it also means that full picture of the organisational journey from the start of receiving National Lottery funding to now is reliant on the accounts of others.

I have had many valuable experiences in terms of how we work, having started to deliver both our one-to-one work and community hosting activities. The values of being human-centred, non-hierarchal, empathetic and flexible run clearly through the work. In fact, I would suggest that our purpose as an organisation is to seed these values in the places where they are useful, be that in the client work itself, or in other organisations and spaces. However, as will be discussed in this report, this leaves a positive impression on the people we work with but does not come without its own unique challenging aspects to navigate. Many of these challenges appear both at an individual level in the 1-1 work and are reflected in the large-scale organisational obstacles we face. For instance, discussions around autonomy are critical to both how much autonomy our community members experience in relation to Likewise, as well as how much autonomy we have as an organisation operating in external systems.

Likewise, as an organisation has both met my expectations whilst still providing a few surprises. The unique non-hierarchal, humans alongside humans working culture was something that I expected to encounter, and indeed it influences our whole way of working. However, I am surprised by the degree to which a lot of practices and cultural aspects are in flux and the comfort around 'not knowing' that comes with this. As we change as an organisation, there is more and more question marks and learning around different parts of the work and how they will change. There is little pretence in terms of knowing the full extent of what these changes mean, and this is something that is being embraced across all levels. Indeed, there is a feeling in the organisation that the work and culture is a constantly moving object rather than a dogmatic practice.

My hope is that my freshness within the organisation will provide a platform which can be used to consider how the organisation has fared and learned in the last year and how this relates to the Community Fund.

To carry out this analysis of the learnings over the last year, I will look at the organisation-wide and service-level statistics in terms of how many people are engaging and for how long. I will then consider the specific learnings around each individual service, highlight some stories from the last year, and analyse the key themes running across the organisation that stood out in the interviews I conducted.

Service run down

OVERALL STATISTICS

9443
Hours delivered
(+5571)

6970
Total sessions
(+3176)

478
Unique clients
(+87)
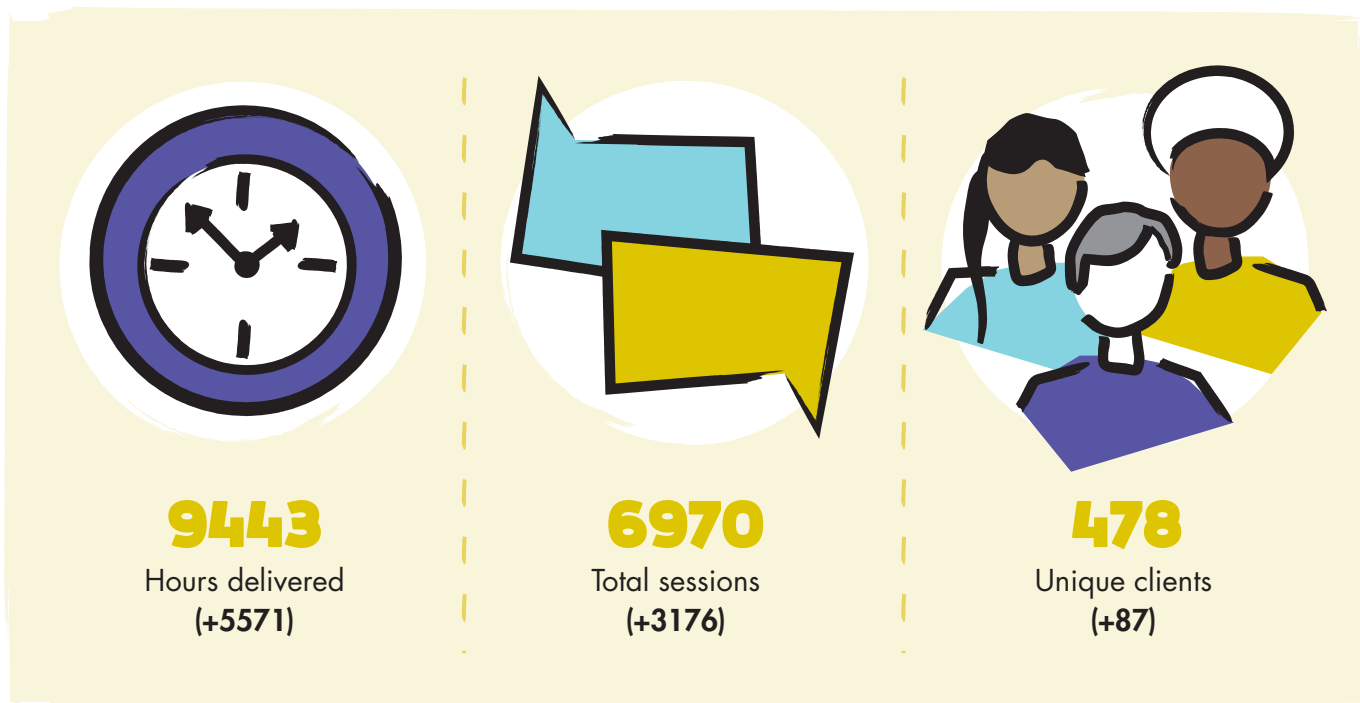
The period of May 2021-22 compared with the previous period saw an overall high level of growth of the use of our services as restrictions loosened following covid. We delivered around 5500 more hours of support across around 3100 more sessions; client numbers also increased by 87. A lot of this increase can be explained by increased capacity for visits in light of the pandemic easing as well as an increase in the services we are providing. Additionally we have increased our capacity for taking on work through employing four more support workers/trainee pod leaders. All services saw growth in use and hours between May 2021-22 except for Informal Support, likely explained by the fact that informal support covers the kind of check-in calls we were providing during lockdown.

A more in-depth look at the growth of our services in 21-22 shows that we also across the board provided longer sessions for clients, except in the 6-8 and community services. However, the average hours of support for each client in the year paints a more mixed picture with clients in floating support, informal support and the community activities receiving less hours of support than the previous period.

In terms of demographics, our overall client base is broadly in step with the ethnic diversity of Camden. White ethnic groups are underrepresented compared to the 2011 census data, whilst Asian and Black ethnic groups as proportion of our clients are within 5% of their Camden totals. Additionally, women make up 60% of our clients, and age groups over 40 are much more present in our client base than younger groups. Both of these statistics are unique of our community which are not in line with the averages within Camden. It is also worth bearing in mind that this data can vary between different services as we will see.

SERVICE STATISTICS

	Average length per session		Average hours of support per client	
	2020-21	**2021-22**	**2020-21**	**2021-22**
6-8 sessions	65	59	3.9	4.3
Floating support	77	90	22.6	20.2
RN/S&C	53	62	7.3	8.5
Informal support	35	72	7.1	4.3
Community	132	126	11.0	4.9
Creative therapy	67	83	6.3	6.7

DEMOGRAPHICS

Ethnicity of clients

Any Asian background
17%

Black or black British
13%

Mixed
14%

White British
24%

White other
19%

White Irish
6%

Gypsy or Irish traveller
1%

Other
9%

Client gender

Female **60%**

Other **1%**

Trans **1%**

Male **38%**
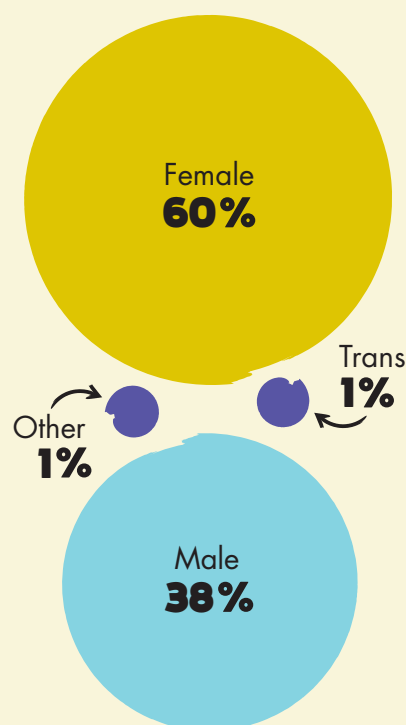
Age group of clients

18-25
5%

26-30
6%

31-40
14%

41-50
21%

51-60
30%

61-70
15%

71+
9%

6-8 SESSIONS

464 Hours delivered **(+340)**

473 Total sessions **(+359)**

109 Number of clients **(+77)**
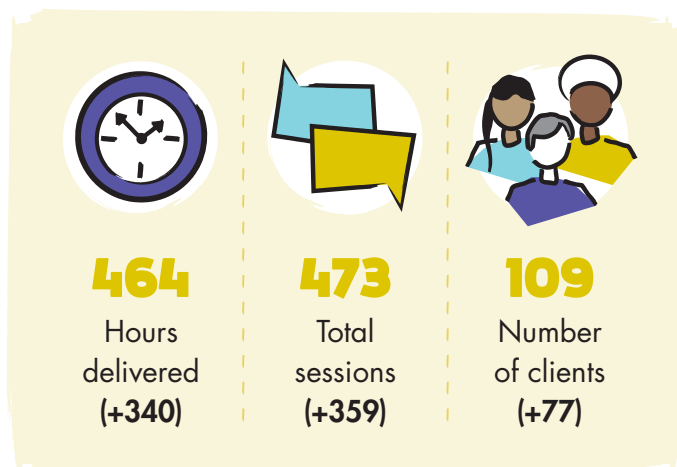
The 6-8 service is a short term 1-1 wellbeing and emotional support service funded by Camden Council and free at the point of use. People who engage with the service have between 6-8 sessions with a support worker from Likewise to work through practical issues or receive support with engaging with something new.

Through my interviews there were plenty of examples of the kind of work community members were undertaking. For instance, assistance enrolling in a jewellery making course and helping to organise a trip to Homebase to buy plants were just some of the practical examples of support alongside ongoing emotional support.

"I had a really nice session with my last support worker. It was really sunny, we went for a coffee with my dog. I know that she enjoyed herself as well. It shows a great deal of mutual respect for boundaries when someone is relaxed enough to let their hair down with you" – **Community Member**

"Someone [I was working with] had ridiculous amount of debt, we managed to get it wiped completely, the alleviation of stress was massive, if they didn't have support they wouldn't have done anything – **Support Worker**

"[My Support Worker] was listening to me and saying she was there, [they] said I can talk about things, we did some dancing which was nice" – **Community Member**

As the statistics show this is a service that has grown in the last year, with a significant increase in hours delivered, the number of sessions and the number of clients. In fact, client numbers have more than tripled. It also worth noting the statistics also show some of the challenges around engagement in the 6-8 service. We would expect the average hours of support for clients to be at a minimum around 6, however it stands at 4.3. This indicates that some clients are disengaging with the service before they have seen out all their sessions. This could be due to a lack of desire to engage anymore with the service, or it could be related to clients achieving their goals before the 8-session mark. There is uncertainty around the root cause of this and further investigation will be required.

Since April, the 6-8 service has fallen under the umbrella of the Camden Mental Health Resilience Network Alliance, a partnership of services brought together by Camden Council, including, Likewise, Mind, Voicability, and the Advocacy Project. This presents both opportunity and challenge for the future as we define what this partnership looks like. There is a great deal of opportunity present in the ability to expand our offering and source more ways to engage people for the full 6-8 sessions, as well as offering a single point of referral which is more human centred in not forcing people to repeat their stories and personal journeys multiple times.

However, there is also challenge in bringing together multiple organisations with different cultures, to create something that is more than the sum of its parts. We are currently in the process of working with the Alliance to evolve what the relationship between our organisations looks like and this can be a challenging, but fruitful, process.

FLOATING SUPPORT

5698	3770	282
Hours delivered	Total sessions	Number of clients
(+3953)	(+2418)	(+205)
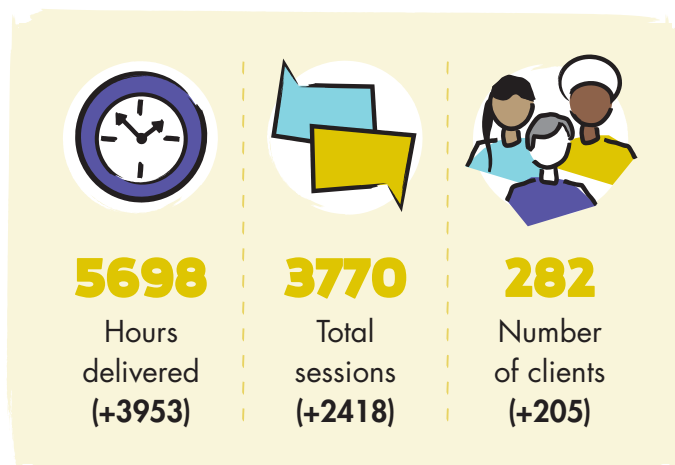
Floating Support is a longer-term service charged at £20 an hour. These sessions provide person-centred and flexible support with relationship at the heart. Sessions can cover anything from practical support with things like shopping, to regular emotional support and check-ins. In terms of hours delivered, this is the service that makes up the largest proportion of what we offer. This is also the service that was initially funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

As we evolve the pod model and some staff begin to focus on the NHS Core Teams, the staff members holding relationships with clients will change. This is not unusual; ultimately support is provided by a team of people, but the simultaneous movement of multiple staff is a challenge as it creates simultaneous experiences of change for a group of clients. It is important that in this change we recognise the validity of the concerns around clients having to build new relationships with their support workers and support people to be with the uncertainty of transition.

One of the major discussion points for staff at the moment is definitions of success within our support work. Nowhere is this discussion more prevalent than within floating support where the outcomes and end goals for the people we are supporting can vary greatly. For some, being able to hold down and be present for a regular visit is a success itself, as is having a visit that supports someone to keep their mental health at a stable level. In my role, as the new lead for evaluation, this poses a challenge in terms of measuring success within floating support but retaining the human aspect that prioritises our values over any arbitrary outcome.

"I use as a litmus test for visits, how do I maintain values in this space"

SUPPORT AND CONNECT (CORE TEAMS)

2042	1968	239
Hours delivered	Total sessions	Number of clients
(+568)	(+269)	(+38)
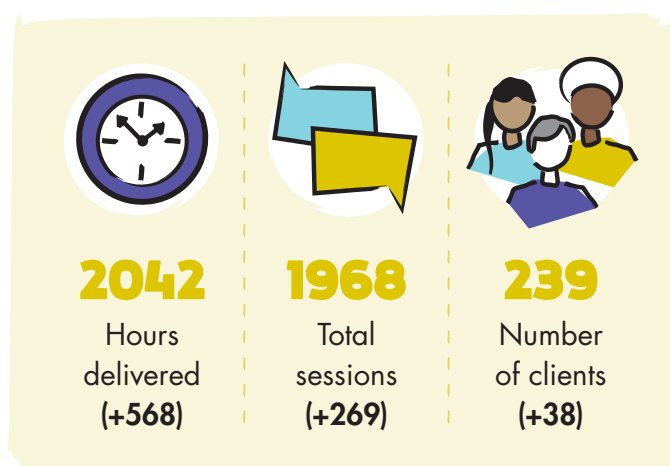
This year we have been working with the Camden and Islington NHS Trust as part of the Core Teams roll out. The Core Team is a multi-disciplinary team of nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, peer coaches, social workers, and our Support and Connect service partners, Mind in Camden. They operate across three geographical areas in Camden. The teams provide support for people who are too high need for GPs to manage but don't meet the criteria for Secondary care.

Our work in the Core Teams has three concurrent aims:

1. Deliver our Support and Connect service to as many people as possible with the best possible outcomes. Through the Core Teams we have worked with 58 people this year in only one of the geographic teams. We have been able to support as we usually would, but also gain insight from our Core Team colleagues. Outcome reviews of this work are yet to happen as a result of data sharing with the NHS – however, we will shortly be running an independent review of this.

2. Increase access and contact with traditionally marginalised communities through our Community Development Lead role. Through this role we have been able to build relationships with marginalised groups, however responding to asks from groups has been difficult due to the Lead lacking the power to impact change. However, our successes from this role include setting up NHS events and activities in different community spaces, cultural competency sessions for NHS staff run by the Somali community and increased visibility of Likewise's community offers.

3. Do everything we can to support systems in being valuable as possible for the people we work with. We want to support the NHS in becoming more person-centred, more relational, more learning focused and in building a culture that supports to the experience of clients to be as human as possible. There have been examples of progress in this area, we have co-designed aways days focused on culture, we have supported reflective practice, created a consistent collaborative space for other Core Team partners, and developed strong relationships with local leaders.

However, there have been associated challenges with the progress demonstrated here. In terms of establishing system change, we have seen how bureaucratic processes limit client access and experience of a human-centred culture. This kind of system change requires buy-in at all levels, whilst there is strategic desire for it, it is not brought-into by those delivering the clinical work. Some of our attempts to challenge and bring ideas have hit brick walls. As a response to this we are better supporting our team members in order to recognise the impact this can have on wellbeing, as well as undertaking a strategic review to better target our efforts.

Another challenge we have faced is in making the most of Support and Connect within the Core Teams. We have entered a system rife with administrative delays and errors we have little control over. The newness of the team has meant we have had to find our own way of working within it. We have had to continually re-introduce ourselves and support understanding of our work. We have been able to respond to this challenge by improving our visibility through targeted communication, building a clear induction process for new staff, giving an overview of the why's how's and who's of our service.

Finally, we have also tried to put in practice a key value of ours: everyone is a client. When met with systematic failings, challenging views on client, or resistance to what feels like good sense to us, it has not always been easy to recognise the different incentives and experience of the people we work alongside. If these issues were present in client work we would work hard to iron them out. Over time, we have come to do this more with our NHS colleagues – for examples, recognising that a particularly risk-averse approach is driven by harrowing experience in hospital, or an unwillingness to support community activities coming from an overwhelming pressure to work with clients. Learning to accept this is an ongoing lesson, but an important one that has improved relationships and given us a more realistic sense of how to have impact. This kind of learning will be vital for our ongoing engagement and attempts to influence systems in various different spaces.

CREATIVE THERAPIES

656
Hours
delivered
(+337)

472
Total
sessions
(+185)

98
Number
of clients
(+47)
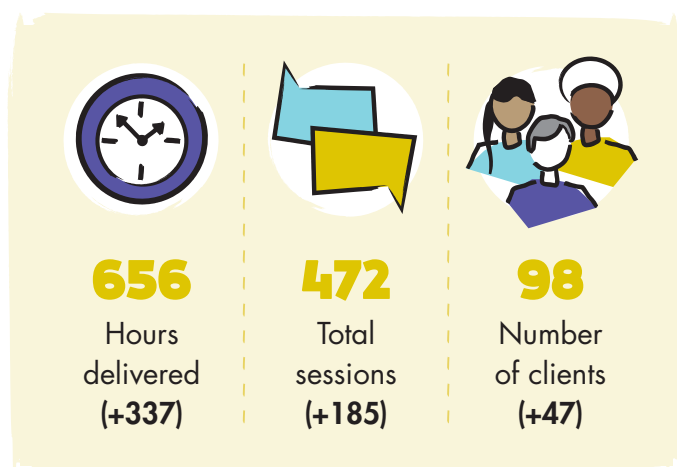
Our creative therapy service is delivered at our community hub by trainees in music, drama, dance, and art therapy. Whilst Likewise is not a therapeutic service itself, we recognise the value of therapeutic spaces and thus creative therapies form an important part of our offer. These one-to-one and groups paces allow individuals to experience a different way of engaging with their wellbeing in an affordable and accessible way. Placement students begin their placements with their own person-centred approaches which are complimented by the Likewise approach to relationships through supervision and support. Independent research conducted by one of the creative therapists reflect a positivity about the service and the impact it is having, the research produced the following findings.

- 88% of referrals are from Services in the Borough of Camden, the rest are from GPs
- The bulk of what we provide is art therapy (69%) but this is dependent upon what placement student or trainees we have
- 75% of clients explored further therapy after Likewise
- 50% score art therapy 10/10, dance and drama therapy had an average score of 8
- 87% of clients felt that Likewise had matched them well with their therapist

- It was identified that both clients and students would like the therapy to last longer than 12 sessions
- Students would also like more communication with the team and broader Likewise Community

During my interview with our Learning Programme Lead, Elodie, it was mentioned that our goal for the next 12 months of creative therapies is to capture learnings and evolve the service. The hope is that there will be more intention and strategic thought around what creative therapies placements look like, how long they are for and how they relate to the wider organisation. Something that was identified by both placement students and staff was a desire to have greater integration. The work itself is being received positively so the next step for the programme is to audit the service and experiences from the last 18 months and apply these learnings to practical changes to the placement experience.

COMMUNITY

531
Hours
delivered
(+520)

246
Total
sessions
(+246)

108
Number
of clients
(+107)
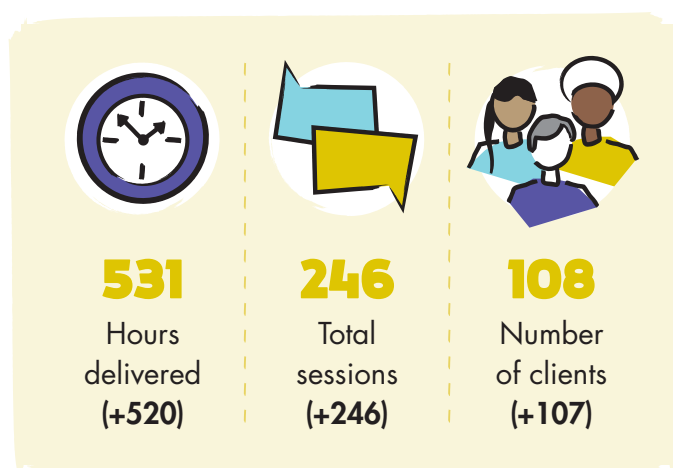
We have continued to provide a range of community activities inside and outside our hub, these include:

- **Community Café** – a drop-in space for community members to have a hot drink and connect with each other

- **Sharing Songs** – an opportunity for community members to listen to music that is important to each other
- **Baking for Wellbeing** – baking sessions hosted at a local school and led by a professional
- **Creative Colouring** – a colouring session run by a community member with assistance from Likewise
- **Culture Trips** – visits to cultural landmarks around London

The last year has seen us expand and strengthen our community offering, giving community members more input into the programme through our regular activity round up spaces.

These provide community members with an opportunity to give their feedback on the current happenings within the community and offer ideas for activities that can be run. In conversation with our former Community Lead (having just finished up 5 years at Likewise), the round up space was identified as one of the community's greatest sources of pride from the last year.

> *"The only promotion we did was pop it on the timetable and discuss it in Community Café, but way more people than expected came. People were ready to sit and engage and talk about the programme in ways I hadn't anticipated. People who had different levels of interaction with us were joining the space"* **– Anna, Community Lead**

Indeed, one of our greatest strengths in the community is that we are opportunistic in harnessing the energy and ideas from our community members. As seen by the roundup space, and community members running sessions such as Creative Colouring. This is something we would like to continue supporting and growing as a new Community Lead takes position.

As we move into the year ahead, we will continue to implement the idea that all are welcome into the space and this is integral to the growth of the community programme. However, this comes with attached challenges in terms of differing perceptions of inclusivity/exclusivity within the community. We are committed to providing a safe space for the community of people that accessed the building when it was a mental health day centre, while including other people and communities in the area.

LEARNING PROGRAMME

95
Students enrolled

The Learning Programme provides both short-term and long-term placements, typically to students during their placement year of university. The programme sees them carry out client work as well as receive related qualifications and training. As part of my research, I conducted a focus group with the current group of students to gauge their thoughts and experiences regarding the learning programme.

One of the clear themes stemming from this was that there is a wealth of personal and professional skills being gained from student's time on the programme. The most immediate that appeared was confidence. Our focus on experiential learning, group learning spaces and supervision allows students to quickly adapt

to delivering one-to-one and community work independently. This builds their confidence and abilities in themselves and their work. Also, conflict management was mentioned as a gained skill, both in the work and in personal lives. There were many anecdotes from students that not only have they been able to manage conflicts and emotions with clients, but they have also been able to support friends, partners, and colleagues. These benefits have in part been made possible through the provision of supervision and learning spaces, for instance LikeLearning is a regular peer space where placement students share experiences and advice with each other. It is these kinds of co-created spaces which were pointed to as having a significant role in student's development alongside experience of the work.

The challenges and learning edges of our approach also showed up in the focus group interviews. Whilst the high levels of autonomy, independence and trust are valuable for students and the work they do with clients, it can risk students feeling isolated or alone in the work. Additionally, setting boundaries with community members can prove a challenge. Students described encountering language or comments they were not comfortable with and struggling to firmly challenge that behaviour and set a boundary. Whilst there is support present for this, there was a sense that more can be done to support students to establish these skills. In response to this the organisation is developing its policy and guideline around working with discriminatory or uncomfortable behaviour which will provide more clarity

and support. However, we have engaged in continuing discussions around our core practice of acceptance, for instance thinking about how our conception of client agency and how much control clients have over behaviour influences how we set boundaries. This work is ongoing and is being actively co-created with students.

In terms of how this learning is reinforced, in conversation with Elodie, our Learning Programme Lead, we discussed how integral supervision is to sense-making, development and reflection. This is a trend that runs across the whole organisation, where supervision provides a space for us to connect with our peers and face challenges as a team. This culture is reflected in the learning programme, where students are encouraged to connect with their supervisor to reflect on challenging situations, name and discuss feelings and emotions stemming from them and take on a positive attitude towards mistakes and development.

A few keys aspects were identified as being part of the next 12 months of the Learning Programme. We anticipate seeing a greater diversity within the programme in terms of academic backgrounds and the degrees students are taking. The hope being that this diversity of experience and knowledge actively enriches the client work. Additionally, there is an identified potential for the learning programmes model to be shared with other organisations and groups who offer placements; thus, delivering systemic change by offering a placement model which centres learning and autonomy for placements students.

Student feedback

"I had an encounter with a client in the community space. They were making comments about my skin colour and appearance, and I wanted to set a boundary around that. I brought it to group supervision, and I wanted to go back to the next one having accomplished something. I told them that it made me uncomfortable and that I would rather than did not comment on my appearance. I was proud of myself for having addressed it and it felt like I used the Likewise way"

"At start of the placement I wasn't sure. Now I'm really enjoying it and enjoying the routine. Dealing with conflict, setting boundaries is giving me more confidence, now it is something I'm more up for whistle being aware of the challenges"

"Setting boundaries with clients is a skill I need to work on…There is some training around boundary setting, but there could be more"

"A client who I was covering was quite intense, so they stuck with me. They had issues with alcohol abuse so when I would arrive, they would be already crying their eyes out, sat on the sofa. I had to think about how I was going to deal with this as the same thing was happening every visit. It was good to learn, and I felt I was able to work with the issues. My supervisor said I dealt with it well which gave me the confidence to keep going"

Case studies

Here are there case studies which bring to life the kind of work we are doing across our different services and streams of work.

CHLOE'S STORY

Chloe started as a placement student with us. They initially were not the most confident and were quite shy in terms of taking on the client work, there was also a sense that they were worried about what their supervisor thought and in tackling uncomfortable conversations. Through the approach of the learning programme to discomfort, vulnerability, and skills development, they were able to start working on and improving her skills in these areas. They started saying yes to opportunities even if they were scary or uncomfortable. They supported the learning lead in running a pre-placement briefing for City University students. They joined working groups tackling issues like equality diversity and inclusion and they interviewed prospective placement students. Towards the end of their time at Likewise they accepted the step up to take a paid temporary support work role and became an important part of the Likewise team.

"I'm so proud of Chloe's journey through the organisation, they are a perfect picture of us. They are unrecognisable from when they joined the organisation to today.

AHMED'S STORY

Ahmed first started attending our community hub after Covid restrictions ended. Initially, he was quite unsure about the community and tentatively engaged, however he is now a valued and regular attendee. He has taken on different opportunities within the space and has influenced the shape of the programme. One of the major highlights of his time engaging with the community programme has been when he used the tube the first time during a culture trip.

*"Ahmed is exactly the kind of person we pictured making the use of the space and continuing to do so"*

ANGELA'S STORY

Service: Support & Connect, Community

Angela was referred to our Support & Connect service experiencing difficulty leaving the house due to agoraphobia. Initially the support proved difficult and there was a period of no contact between KW and their support worker. However, the openness of the service in terms of coming back in meant that they followed up with their primary care navigator, reached out to Likewise and the referral was reopened. Since then, we have been able to support Angela with getting out of the house more. They now regularly attend community activities and have expressed getting a great deal of benefit out of this. They are an active and confident member of our community who has offered valuable feedback and input into sessions. The Support & Connect support has ended but there is a sense with both their support worker and Angela that the service has served its purpose and the community now provides a space to feel connection

"I couldn't go out of my house; the anxiety was so bad. We tried to go to the bottom of my road and I couldn't...[my support worker said] calm down, were just going to out then we'll come back, next time we'll go further...[my support worker] has helped me so much in the last 8-9 months"

Organisational themes
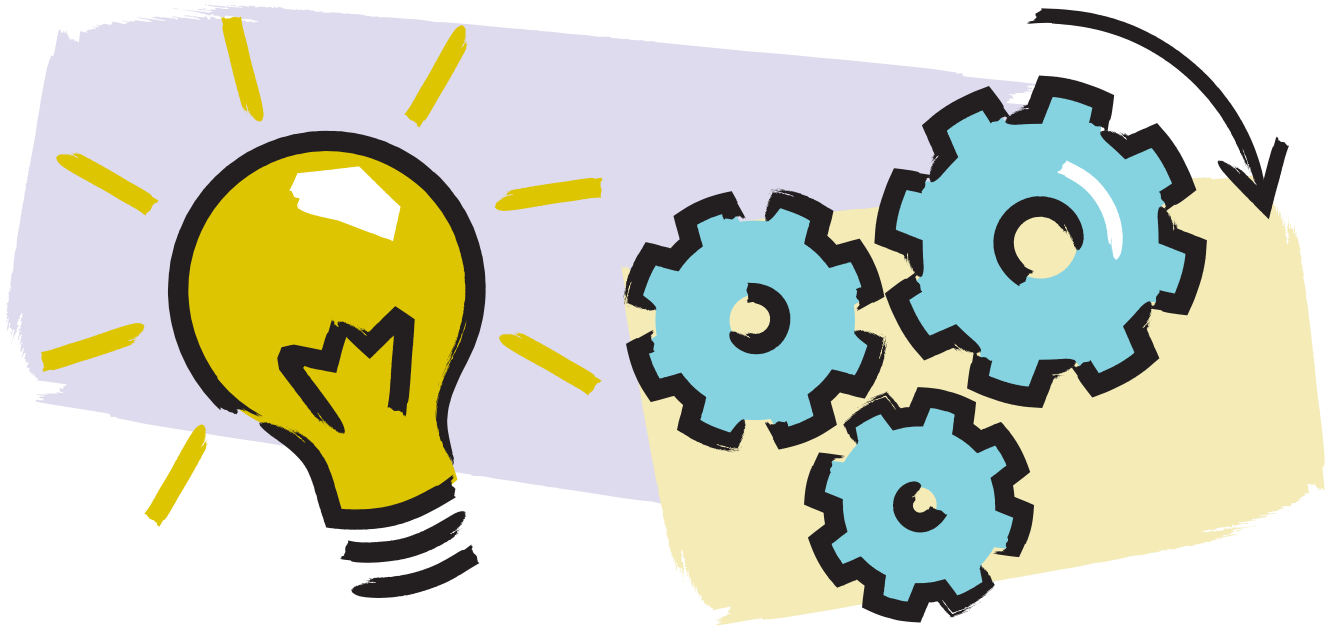
CHANGE AND ADAPTING TO CHANGE

One of the major themes that appeared in my interviews with staff is the concerns around the changes that are occurring within the organisation regarding partnership working and how we organise ourselves.

Staff involved in partnership working where we are tasked with supporting change are finding that working within systems that don't prioritise human relationships, complexity and a commitment to less hierarchical ways of working is a challenge. There has been a great deal of reflection on the obstacles that are faced through working in these environments. One way in which we support this work is through consistently checking in as a team on how we are progressing and feeling, and suggestions for practical solutions. Additionally, there has been an emphasis on finding our allies within the system who are actively aligned with the ways of working we are committed to. Developing this network will continue into the next year.

Likewise has developed a way of working that has been successful as an alternative to traditional approaches to mental health. The values and practices at the heart of this are important to our staff individually, and to us as an organisation, and our clients. For system change to follow from our work in external settings, our values and way of working need to remain prominent.

The key point of enquiry for us is how we seed our values through our partnership working without diluting them, the mitigation for this is through ensuring we have the mechanisms in place to measure how the values are present in our work and if this is changing over time. Ultimately, as a team we are collectively responsible for upholding our values and through regularly checking in our experiences and feelings and how they are present in the work we can uphold our values..

"There is a risk we get swallowed up by larger systems"

BOUNDARIES AND DISCRIMINATORY BEHAVIOUR

A key theme through the last few months within the organisation has been around how we respond to discriminatory behaviour from clients while upholding relationships of acceptance and belonging This issue strikes to the heart of a point of tension between a few of our key values and ethos. Fundamentally, we believe in the value of acceptance and that everybody, both clients and staff, should feel safe to be themselves. However, when uncomfortable or discriminatory behaviour appears in relationships, this undoubtedly negatively impacts the wellbeing and safety within that relationship and affects the degree to which the person impacted can feel safe to be themselves.

There are some recent examples of how our core value of acceptance and putting clients first is challenged. One examples of this is when we have to take action to stop someone accessing the community space for the safety of our staff and other community members. Over the last year we have had to exclude a community member because they have been presenting with threats of harm towards other individuals, or a level of aggression deemed unsafe. Grappling with our intentions to meet people as humans, foregrounding acceptance, belonging and unpicking oppressive power structures while having to call the police and exclude someone has been challenging.

There is a specific challenge within this that the organisation is grabbling with: how can we protect our staff, clients and community members against discriminatory behaviour and empower them to set boundaries, whilst accepting our clients for who they are, and remaining client focused in approach? We are tackling this in several ways, our EDI working group is formulating practical solutions around policies on how we respond and deal with discriminatory behaviour in the context

of our approach, as well as proposing positions within the team such as EDI leads who are trained to support staff and students encountering certain behaviours. We are also keeping the issue near the top of our agenda for discussion, there have been several organisation wide conversations about boundaries and responses to discrimination that are likely to continue.

Whilst it will always be difficult for us outright eliminate discriminatory behaviour and language from our clients, we are conscious of doing more to support staff, students and community members and have begun taking the practical steps to do so

MEASURING SUCCESS AND DEFINING SUCCESSFUL SUPPORT

One of the major challenges for myself in this new role is to evolve our human-centred means by which we measure outcomes and success in our works. Whilst we are capturing outcomes now that we can use to derive learning, there is room for a revamped set of outcomes. One of the obstacles within this is establishing outcomes that are flexible to the messy reality of client relationships and people's lives, where what constitutes success can change by the session. This is reflected in my conversations with both clients and staff with a lot of focus being on values-led and consistent support as markers of success.

For the clients I spoke to, there was a great deal of variance in terms of the specifics of what successful support entailed, however one of the key themes that appeared was authenticity in the relationship. There was the idea that the support worker-client relationship should be one that is human and non-hierarchical and sees someone as a person rather than a 'patient'. Additionally, there was the idea that just being present, and an active listener was a hallmark of successful support. Finally, a theme that underlines all of

this is that support should be flexible enough to provide both practical and emotional support, this can mean going to the shops one week and talking through difficult emotions the next. Through all of these features its notable how important the values of the support worker are alongside the content of the support sessions.

"My previous support worker was the gold standard of treating me as an individual"

This is reflected in my discussions with support workers about how they define success in the work, again there was the idea that there is no specific framework for success and rather complexity of relationships, people and the systems we are part of needs to be accounted for. Rather, it is the way in which you uphold the values you intended to bring to sessions that can be considered success, as well as the recognition that being present and consistently reliable for someone is a successful outcome.

In the community programme of activities and events, there seems to be a slightly more defined end goal. Our former Community Lead Anna, referred to a general end goal of people finding belonging through the community programme. The success within the community is centred in the interactions we can foster between community members and staff and between community members.

"When someone transitions from passive to active in the space"

Across all the types of work and perspectives, success is difficult to pin down. There is a focus on values and being with people across all work. The challenge for myself is to take these less tangible metrics of success and combine them with outcome measures that are flexible and resonate with our way of working.

AMBITIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Finally, a prominent feature of the interviews was ambitions and fears for the future of likewise, particularly from the perspective of staff. For support workers, this ambition was focused on the adaptation in the way we structure the team, in terms of making it successful. As part of this, there is a desire to have greater involvement in the strategic end of the work. Specific mention was given to our Floating Support service and continuing to develop its sustainability and accessibility for clients.

A concern that has also appeared is staff retention and how people leaving affects our organisation. In the past few months, a few long-term members of staff have left their roles. This is a difficult in terms of replacing them and their expertise, but also, these staff held a great deal of our values through their experiences. As new people join Likewise, there is a collective challenge for all of us to carry our values and help others learn and unlearn as they grapple with the core of our approach.

Conclusion

The last year has been a period of sizable change for Likewise - this is highlighted by the growth in the use of (and scope of) our services, and through the further development of our partnership working. This is an exciting and transient period, with myself being in a new position and many others joining there are new opportunities to create change and develop our work. There is a flipside to this newness that covers anxieties about what might be lost through changes in staff and engaging in new spaces. As part of this process, we want to be aware of what it is that is important to us as organisation, what it is that we want to let go of, and what is new that is being created.

The natural fear of what we could lose through change as an organisation is something that has run though many of the interviews with staff. There was a strong sense through all of them that organisational change, whilst having possibilities, also triggers a very human response to change. However, one thing that stood out throughout all the interviews is that are values and practices remain central to our way of working with each other and with our clients, even as we offer more hours of support. This resonated most in the interviews with clients. Whilst there were challenges and criticisms present, all clients that I interviewed felt that we were living our values within our work. The goal for us is to keep learning as an organisation, keeping hold of what is working, and developing what could be improved.

As new people step into roles, our responsibility as an organisation is to continue our learning journey through taking onboard new perspectives and harnessing that energy. It's also the responsibility of myself, in my role, and everyone else to uphold our values and what is currently working within them; further embedding this into our working culture. 2021-2022 was a busy and energising period for Likewise, and we look forward to embracing the upcoming period and the change it will bring!

Likewise