

Likewise

Learning Report **2024**



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Executive Summary: 2023-2024

This year, we've made meaningful strides in expanding our reach, deepening our understanding of community needs, and addressing challenges within our work.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Partnerships and Influence:** Prepared for the launch of the Reach Out Camden Partnership while strengthening our role within NHS Core Teams to bridge clinical and community care.
- **Community-Centered Growth:** Enhanced our offerings by listening to the needs of our community, reflected in both 1:1 support and group activities. Attendance at community programs has grown.
- **Creative Therapies Expansion:** Secured funding through City Bridge Trust, enabling us to provide free, accessible creative therapies like art, music, and dance.
- **Tackling Discrimination:** Addressed challenges of discrimination in our work by fostering open team discussions and improving strategies to create inclusive, supportive spaces for all.

HEADLINE IMPACT

- **Evolving Offerings:** Responded to rising socioeconomic pressures with initiatives like the Admin Afternoon sessions, helping community members navigate practical challenges.
- **Combating Isolation:** Addressed increasing loneliness in Camden by fostering meaningful relationships—100% of participants in our 6-8 Sessions program reported a positive connection with their keyworker.
- **Service Satisfaction:** Achieved over 90% satisfaction in 1-1 services, with 95% of 6-8 Sessions participants reaching their goals.

OUR YEAR IN IMPACT

- 90% satisfaction across all our 1-1 services
- More than 60% growth in the number of community programme attendees
- 100% of 1-1 clients reporting a good relationship with their keyworker
- 530 free meals served to the community
- More than 6500 hours of 1-1 support delivered to more than 300 people
- 95% of community attendees reporting a positive impact on their wellbeing
- 71% of 6-8 clients reporting that they are better managing their mental health



The Growing Need in Our Community



Over the past year, we've seen a significant increase in the need for support across our community and greater Camden. As the cost-of-living crisis deepens, our team has stepped up to provide essential help in response to what staff see daily: more people struggling financially. In our community sessions, the stories of individuals just trying to make ends meet are more frequent, and our hub has become a warm, safe space for many who rely on it in tough times.

Isolation and loneliness are compounding these challenges. Social pressures are pushing more people into isolation, leaving them even more vulnerable to financial strain. Camden now has the second-lowest proportion of social care users who feel they have enough contact with others, with nearly 20% more residents who are single, separated, or widowed than the national average (Camden Council, 2024).

"You talk to people who, if they had family, would have help with things like letters and passports. Many are truly on their own, isolated. A place like this is like a replacement family, filling a gap in people's lives" – **Support worker**

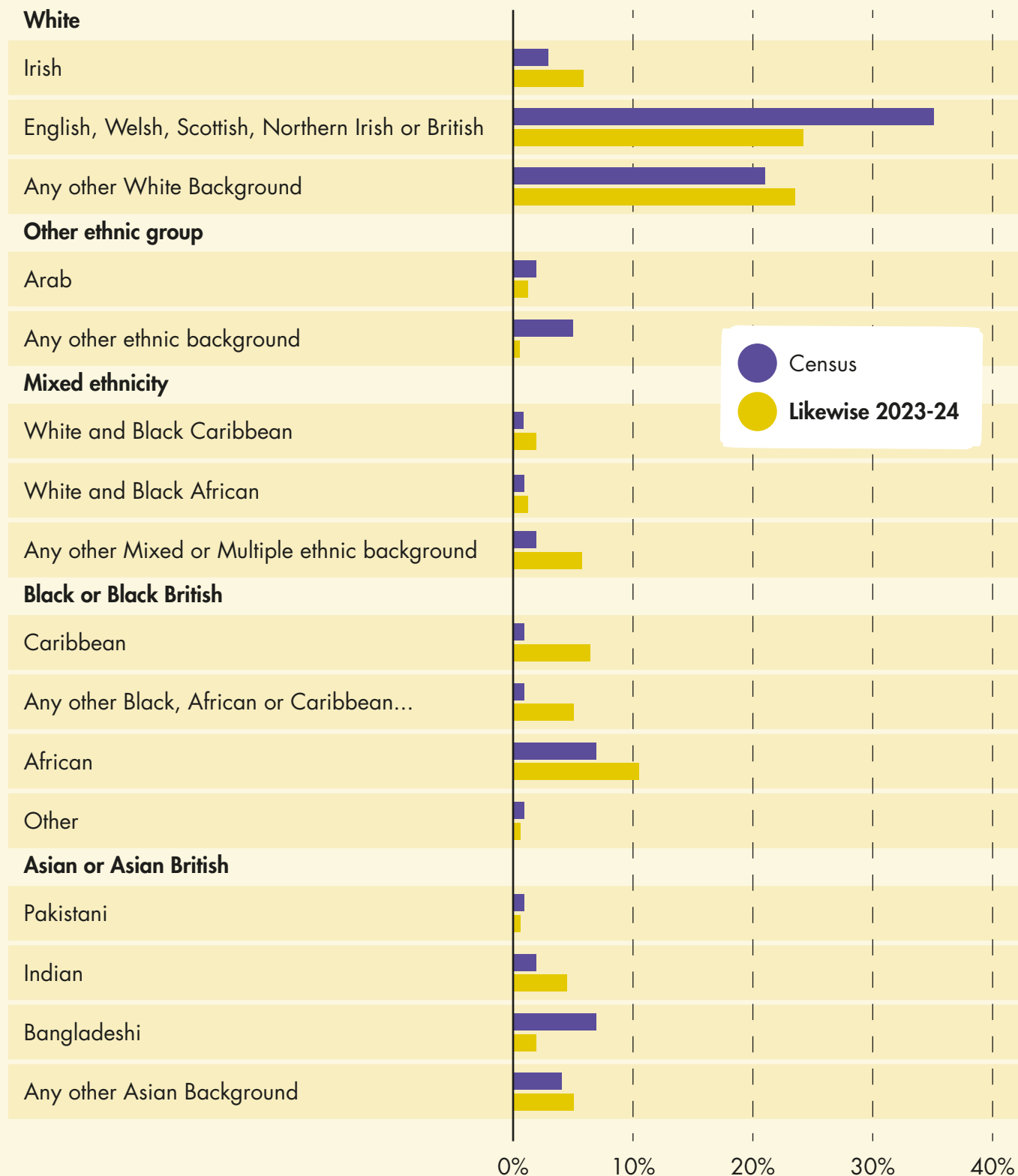
"People can come in with loads of practical demands, but then deep down it's the quality of relationships that people are missing. I can go through each of my clients and pinpoint the social isolation" – **Support worker**

As isolation grows, so does the vulnerability of those without a support network. In response, we've expanded our 1-to-1 and community programs, adding sessions such as our admin support drop in session for anyone needing assistance with paperwork or applications. These sessions are just one way we're helping to bridge the gap.

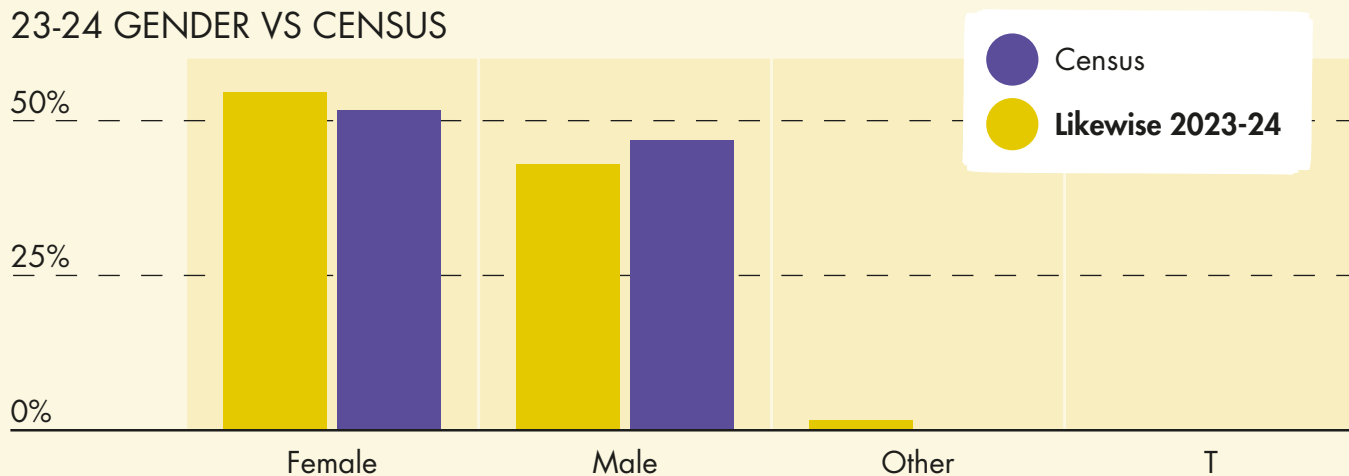
This past year has shown us the critical role we play in fighting isolation in Camden. Our hub and 1-on-1 sessions are more than just services; they offer connection and companionship—a lifeline to those who need it most. Of those attending our community programs, 88% report a greater sense of belonging. At a time when many feel vulnerable, we're here to foster connection.

In Numbers

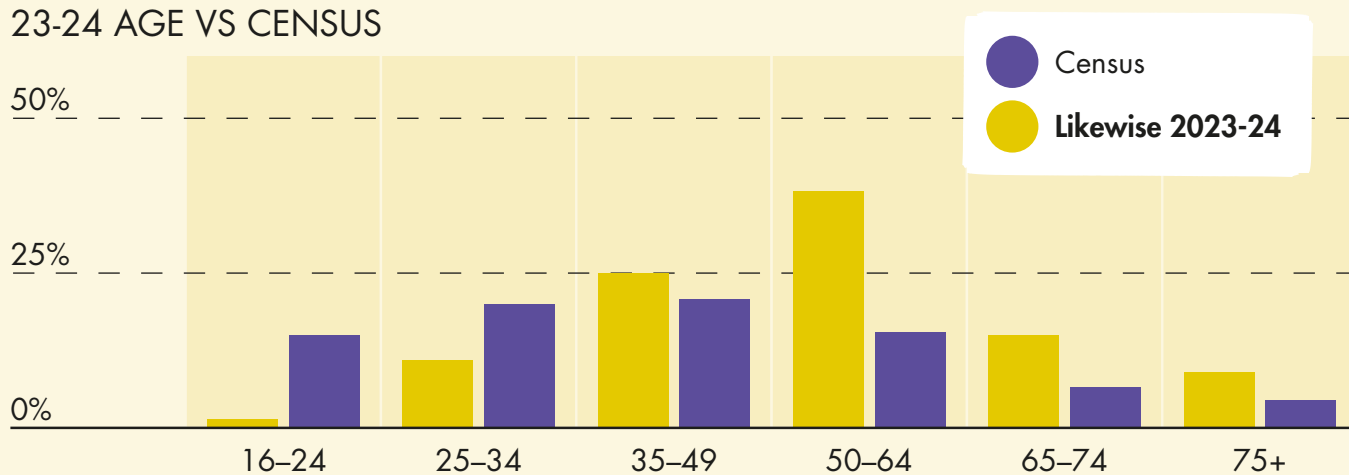
23-24 ETHNICITY VS CENSUS




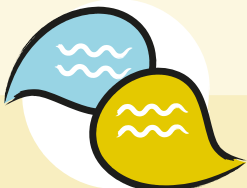


23-24 GENDER VS CENSUS



23-24 AGE VS CENSUS



OVERALL FIGURES

	 Hours	 Sessions	 Unique Participants	 Total Attendances
1-1 *	6,700 (-14%)	3,027	301	-
Community	1,288 (+8%)	953 (+15%)	165 (+63%)	2,395 (+14%)

*includes Support and Connect estimate

Short-term 1-1

OUR WORK WITH NHS CORE TEAMS: BUILDING TRUST AND A PERSON-CENTRED APPROACH

This past year, our work with NHS Core Teams has been focused on finding our place within the system, supporting Camden's diverse communities, and enhancing multi-disciplinary care. Our Support and Connect service reached an estimated 177 clients, while our community development workers fostered trust by hosting regular coffee mornings and tailored talks for specific groups like the Somali and Chinese communities.

Our collaboration with clinical staff has created meaningful, multi-disciplinary support opportunities. Regular team meetings allow us to tap into clinical expertise, enriching client care. For example:

"I worked with a woman who was initially distrustful of professionals after difficult experiences. By creating a safe space to share, I helped bridge her care with a psychiatrist she was wary of. Setting up a three-way meeting allowed her to try new treatments. Over time, she reflected on her journey, realizing that she didn't have to judge professionals by past experiences. Without this collaboration, she would have likely left feeling frustrated." – **Support and Connect Worker**

Alongside Mind in Camden, we've also implemented an evaluation role within the Core Team to assess service impact through staff and service user feedback. This evaluation has led to innovations such as the Kentish Town Triage Calls Pilot.



KENTISH TOWN TRIAGE CALLS PILOT

The Kentish Town Core Teams trialled brief introductory calls for new referrals to learn about clients' needs and goals. Our evaluation showed these calls significantly improved client experiences, especially due to their person-centred nature. Interviews and data revealed that clients felt more understood and supported. The success of this approach has made these triage calls a permanent part of the process, demonstrating our commitment to a more person-centred system.

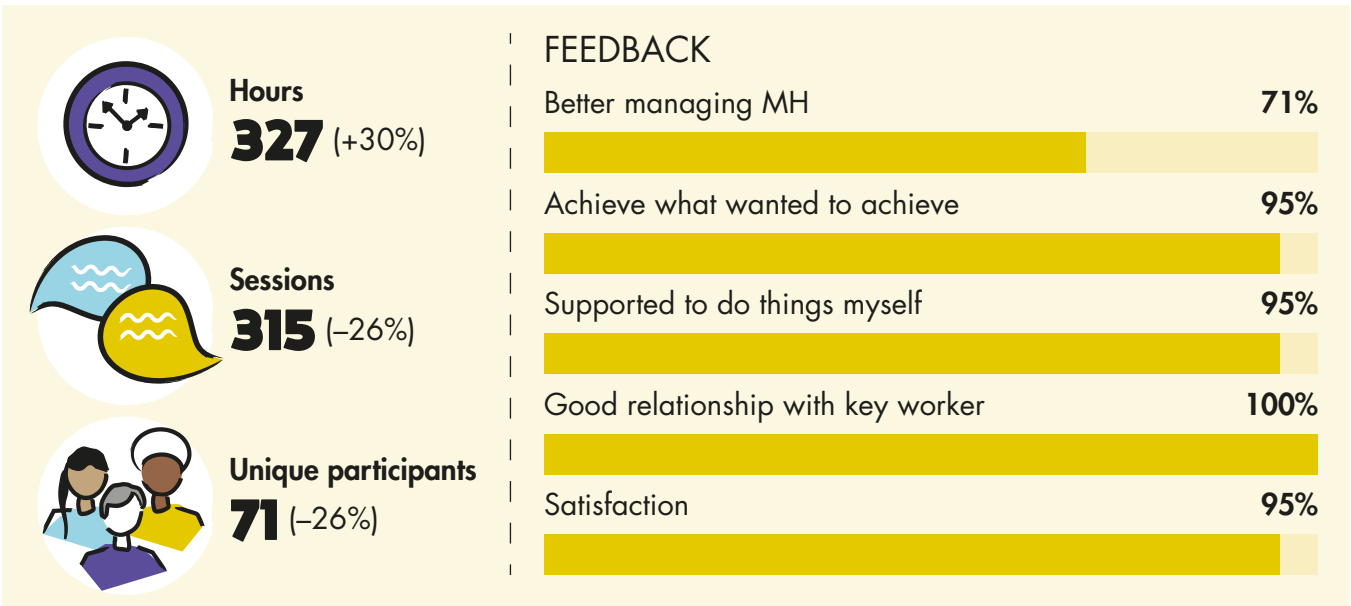
Through our work with NHS Core Teams, we're not only enhancing trust and connection but also taking tangible steps to build a healthcare system that genuinely centres on each person's needs.

OUR KEY LEARNING: BALANCING INDEPENDENCE WITHIN THE NHS

This year, we've deepened our understanding of what it means to work within the NHS system. Previously, we focused on moving from a position of independence to a willingness to collaborate within the system. Now, we're learning that while partnership is essential, some aspects of our work require us to maintain a degree of independence to deliver the kind of support our community needs.

Navigating KPIs and standard metrics has presented challenges, as these measurements don't always align with our approach to support. In the coming year, we will continue exploring how we can fully participate in the health and social care system while preserving the flexibility and independence crucial to our practice—especially when it comes to standardized reporting.

6-8



PREPARING FOR TRANSFORMATION
IN OUR 6-8 SERVICE

Our 6-8 service has been gearing up for significant changes this year as part of Reach Out Camden—a partnership among four Camden-based community organizations designed to create a single point of access for referrals. This single referral point will improve collaboration across services and reduce the need for individuals to retell their stories repeatedly.

Early in the year, we operated at reduced capacity for the 6-8 service, even pausing referrals to address a growing waitlist. This slowdown was mainly due to staffing challenges and fewer placement students than usual to support our sessions. By year-end, however, we returned to normal service levels, and we anticipate a strong increase in the number of people we’ll serve in the coming year.

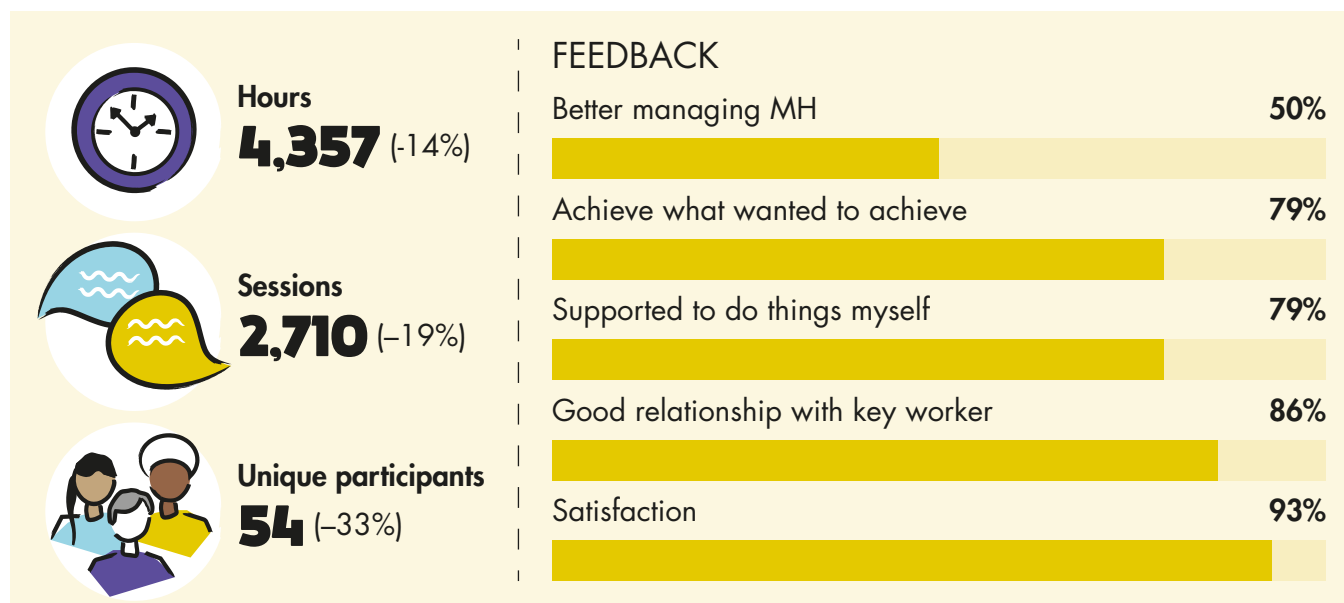
Despite these capacity challenges, we maintained our high standard of support, with 95% of participants reporting satisfaction and achieving their goals. This demonstrates our commitment to delivering impactful, person-centred support through the 6-8 service.

OUR KEY LEARNING: BUILDING
PARTNERSHIPS REQUIRES PATIENCE

Our primary takeaway from launching this partnership has been the importance of patience.

Establishing a single referral system took considerable time and felt, at times, non-linear—but this was a natural part of building something new. Being present and patient through the process has been essential, underscoring that patience is foundational for a successful, lasting partnership.

Long-term 1-1



FLOATING SUPPORT: PROVIDING STABILITY AND CONNECTION

Our Floating Support service offers regular, long-term sessions for both practical and emotional support, tailored to each client's needs. This support can range from discussing how someone feels to assisting with applications or shopping—always flexible and responsive to the needs of our community.

This year, we've seen reduced service outputs, keeping referrals closed so that we can devise a sustainable model for the service to function. As a result, we've been working with the same client base, with clients leaving naturally without immediate replacements in caseloads. We anticipate re-opening referrals next year, bringing new clients and fresh energy to the service.

Despite limited capacity, Floating Support maintains strong outcomes: 93% client satisfaction and 79% reporting they achieved their support goals. Given the complex, non-

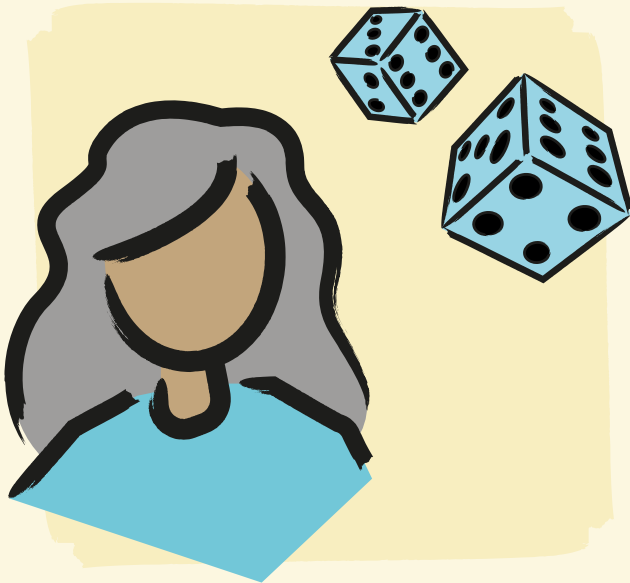
linear nature of many of these relationships, this feedback is especially meaningful. For many clients, Floating Support offers stability rather than radical change, which is essential in their journey.

Our staff have seen first hand the power of simply "being there" for clients—offering a steady, supportive presence. As we prepare to bring in new clients, we look forward to spreading this impact further.

OUR KEY LEARNING: MEETING DEEPENING NEEDS

Our main takeaway this year has been recognizing the heightened needs within Floating Support. Many clients are among those most impacted by ongoing socio-economic pressures, with more seeking help for benefits applications, financial support, and connection. Through this program, we've gained deeper insights into our community and their needs, equipping us to offer the support that truly matters.

1-1 Case Studies



HARRIET'S STORY

Harriet is a 70 year old woman who has been working with Floating Support for over a year. Due to medical issues she is currently housebound and signed up to get some help with some practical tasks she struggles with doing by herself. She relies on the support to get out of the house, which helps her general mental and physical health.

She enjoys playing games with her support workers, they have helped her improve her living conditions by tidying around the house and helping her to go outside. She shared how much it means to her to have people really interact with her and listen.

"They're very good people, they listen to you and they help you, and if they don't know they find people who do."



ANGELA'S STORY

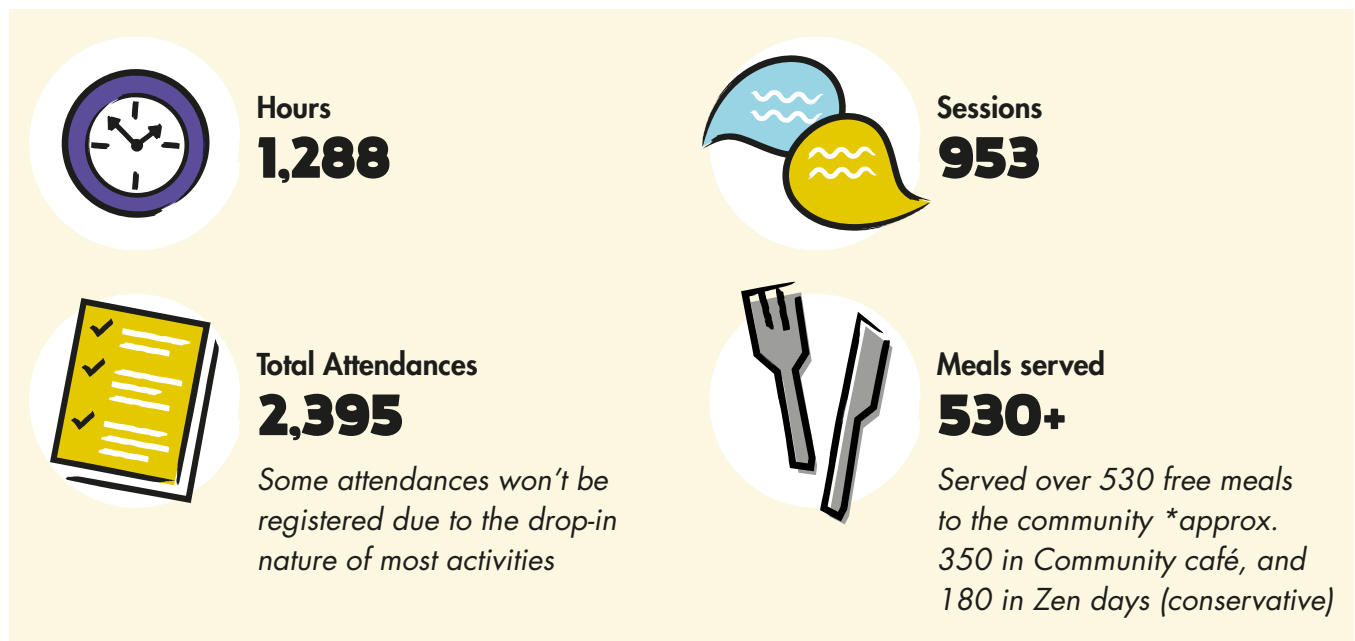
Angela is a 93 year old woman who signed up for the 6-8 service in order to help her interact more with the community.

She used to be very active in the community and attended regular community meetings on her estate, as well as local community centres and classes, and had a wide circle of friends. However, over the years these meetings have stopped happening, and many of her friends have passed away. This has left her more isolated, which combined with mobility issues, has limited her social life over recent years.

The purpose of starting support was to interact with more people and to help with practical tasks which she struggled with. She has had a very positive experience and has received help with navigating online and getting out of the house. She looks forward to continuing her sessions with Likewise.

"We went out, which I wouldn't have done on my own. We sat on a bench on a lovely afternoon that wasn't too hot. So that was lovely for me."

Community



THE COMMUNITY PROGRAMME: FOSTERING CONNECTION, WELLBEING, AND BELONGING

Our Community Programme offers a wide range of activities designed to enhance wellbeing by creating a welcoming space where people can connect and truly be themselves.

Over the past year, we have continued to offer a diverse line-up of activities, supported by students, volunteers, and staff, allowing people to engage in ways that resonate with them.

| *"I can be myself with support from staff"*

| *"It's helped with my mood. Being around others helps. Sometimes I isolate myself. It's a reason to get out of the house."*

New Activities and Partnerships

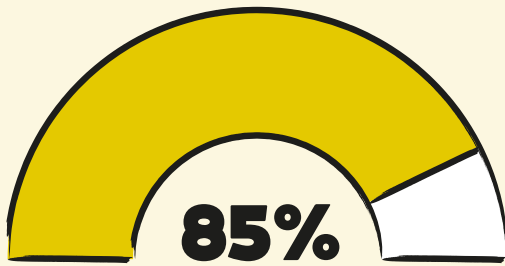
To meet community needs, we introduced several new activities this year focused on fostering creativity and connection:

- **People's Poetry:** A safe space for reading, writing, and sharing poetry, building connections among those who share a love for self-expression through words.
- **Canine Café:** Run in partnership with Pets as Therapy, this space uses the calming presence of animals to create a gentle environment for connection.

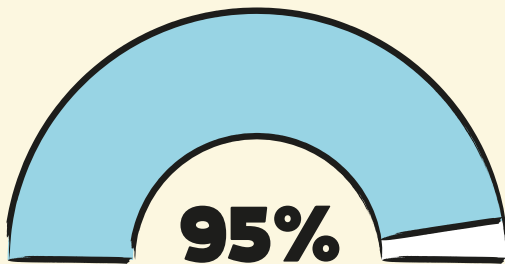
Why We Offer These Activities

- To support a sense of belonging and acceptance.
- To provide an inclusive space where people feel free to be themselves, in both good and challenging times.
- To offer skill-building opportunities that members can use in their own lives.
- To amplify community members' voices, fostering active participation and leadership.

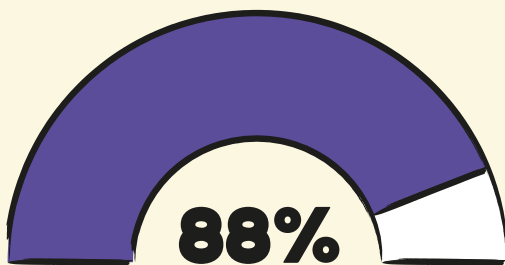
FEEDBACK: KEY RESULTS



85% of respondents are satisfied with their experiences of the programme



95% of respondents said attending community activities had a positive impact on their wellbeing



88% of respondents said they felt a sense of belonging through engaging with community activities

STRENGTHENING FEEDBACK TO GUIDE OUR WORK

This year, we improved our feedback process, launching the Community Feedback Form to better understand community experiences and needs. Insights from this bi-annual survey have deepened our understanding of what matters to our community, guiding us as we shape the future of the programme.

COMMUNITY NEEDS: WHAT WE LEARNED

Through feedback and analysis of local socio-economic trends, two key needs emerged:

1. **Support with Practical Tasks**

Many community members seek assistance with tasks like housing, benefits, and immigration due to the complexity of these systems. Rising costs are also a concern; between December 2022 and December 2023, Camden Foodbank saw a 34% increase in emergency food box distribution. Surveys conducted with our partner, Feast, highlighted food insecurity as a major issue for a significant portion of our community.

2. **Social Interaction and Connection**

Loneliness and isolation are recurring themes, with many members emphasizing that simply being around others supports their mental health. The chance to leave the house, meet people, and feel part of a supportive environment is vital for wellbeing.

OUR RESPONSE: STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS AND EXPANDING SERVICES

Community Meals with Feast

In partnership with Feast, we launched Community Meals during our Wednesday Community Café, providing fresh, nutritious meals using surplus ingredients. This year, we expanded to offer meals on Fridays, using our Hub Kitchen to double our service capacity, serving over 350 meals. This shared experience offers both nourishment and connection.

"Connecting with people and sharing a meal gives me a sense of belonging. Being on good terms with people feels nice." — **Community Member**

Rise and Shine Baking

Led by Agnieszka Siedlecka, our Baking for Wellbeing class continues to be a staple, allowing members to learn baking skills while fostering friendships. We plan to expand this popular program next year.

Community Events

To strengthen community ties, we hosted a variety of events this year, bringing people together and spotlighting activities and organizations:

- Seasonal Celebrations: Summer, Autumn, and Winter gatherings.
- Green Up Day at the Hub, featuring crafts, meals, and eco-focused activities.
- Monthly Zen Days with Mind in Camden and Zen Project, offering yoga, meditation, and massage.
- A Woodshop of Recycled Delights workshop in our Community Garden.

Each of these events was free and open to all, encouraging community participation and interaction.

Admin Support

Our weekly Admin Mornings continue to provide essential support with tasks like PIP appeals, housing support, visa applications, and medical communications. With over 60 hours of one-on-one support, we've helped many people navigate complex administrative processes.

"It's crucial for wellbeing, to belong somewhere. I've always felt that here. People remember my name, and I'm just blown away by how welcoming it is." — **Community Member**

Through these efforts, our Community Programme has become a source of vital support, connection, and belonging for Camden's residents. Looking ahead, we aim to deepen our impact, further adapting to meet evolving community needs.

LAUNCHING REACH OUT: EXPANDING ACCESS TO PERSONALIZED MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Throughout 2023 and early 2024, we prepared to launch Reach Out—a wellbeing alliance dedicated to providing accessible, personalized mental health support in Camden. With the Community Programme now part of Reach Out, we aim to expand our reach through a dual pathway system: community members can continue to drop in informally, or access guided referrals through Reach Out to find the most suitable activities and support options.

Officially launched in April 2024, we're excited to fully integrate our Community Programme into this network in the coming year.

KEY LEARNINGS AND FUTURE FOCUS

This year, we emphasized deepening our understanding of community needs, especially with the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis. Our response has included broadening support in new areas, such as food security, practical help, and administrative assistance.

We've also seen the rise of smaller community groups, like the Garden Guardians and the Baking for Wellbeing Group, each bringing people together around shared activities and fostering a sense of belonging. Moving forward, we're committed to creating even more opportunities for people to connect, empowering them to form supportive communities of their own.

Case Study: The Garden Guardians

The Garden Guardians are a group of community members who meet every Friday afternoon to collectively tend to the garden. They plant and pot seeds, build and maintain structures and spend time with nature in the garden.



LAURA'S STORY

After coming to Likewise in 2022, Laura found the Garden Guardians after asking about ways she could volunteer. She now attends the sessions weekly as well as workshops such as the Woodshop of Recycled Delights. She has visited other community gardens in London and emphasised the value of the social element of the Garden Guardians at Likewise. Laura said that she is happy to find a place where she can give back to the community and feel useful, as she struggles finding places that can work with the needs that she has. Laura hopes to continue with the group and developing the garden space for the community.

"Even if I find socialising extremely difficult, if it's consistently the same people, then I'll get to know them anyway just from the little things that go on, and that's what I'd like to happen. I need to get to know people because I'm very isolated, and I've had a laugh here."

OSCAR'S STORY

Oscar first joined Likewise through being referred by his GP, and had a background in landscaping, but hadn't been able to focus on it for several decades due to difficult circumstances in his life.

He now attends Garden Guardians regularly and is a prominent member of the community, finding ways to expand the resources of the garden, talking to other community gardens and exploring how they can further develop the space.

"The nice thing is you can come here just for a chat, you can come here for a bit of company, you can come here to have some knowledge and also to participate in something. So for your mind, body and soul, it's very positive as far as I'm concerned."

References: Camden Foodbank, Helping Local People in Crisis, www.camden.foodbank.org.uk

CREATIVE THERAPIES

Our Creative Therapies program offers accessible, no-cost Dance Movement Therapy, Music Therapy, and Art Therapy to the community, available in both one-on-one and group settings. In the UK, these services are often hard to access—especially for those with limited resources—due to high costs and availability gaps. As our only formal therapeutic offering, we're proud to remove these barriers by hosting Creative Therapies free of charge in our welcoming Community Hub.

This offering is made possible through our partnerships with universities, bringing in dedicated trainee therapists on extended placements, and our new collaboration with the City Bridge Foundation, which underscores the importance of providing free therapeutic services in London. To maximize impact, we've introduced new reporting frameworks and accountability measures that help us understand and expand our reach. New "Getting to Know You" and "Ending" forms are part of this approach, helping

us track client progress and refine our methods, while recognizing that such tools will never fully capture the richness of each individual's journey.

Looking ahead, we aim to expand group sessions, creating inclusive communities within our Creative Therapies program. This involves reaching out to more people and ensuring group sessions become regular, supportive spaces for connection and healing.

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

We're gaining insights on how to more effectively monitor the progress and impact of our Creative Therapies. Through stories shared by participants and the growth of small, supportive communities within these sessions, we're seeing the unique strengths that creative therapies bring to people's lives. These spaces foster connection and healing, and we're committed to nurturing these micro-communities, keeping the service open, accessible, and impactful for all who need it.



Case Studies: Creative Therapies

LIKEWISE BAND (Group Case Study)

In 2023, community members participating in music therapy at Likewise came together to form a band, rehearsing weekly at the Likewise Hub. Guided by trainee music therapist Joe Jezard, the band performed three original songs at a local community event, delivering a ten-minute live set to an enthusiastic audience.

"The listening and attending to each other is really what helped the performance be a success. I then saw all the members interact with other musicians present socially. To me it seemed that everyone was being met in relation to their potential and what they can offer the community musically." – Joe Jezard (Music Therapist)

Mark's Story

Mark joined the music therapy program after working previously with Joe. After several months of individual therapy, he joined the band, taking on the role of lead singer and primary lyricist. For Mark, the band has been a vital creative outlet and a way to connect with others, as he hopes to share their music more widely.

"It's good, not just for me but for other individuals. Because when I work, you know I don't do things for myself, I have a focus and I do things for other people." – Mark

James' Story

James joined Likewise initially for art therapy, later moving on to one-on-one music therapy. Within a few months, he became the drummer

of the newly formed band, creating original compositions alongside fellow community members. Having been in a band years prior, James found joy in reconnecting with this shared creative experience, and he hopes the band will continue to grow and evolve.

"I leave here with the thought that I've gone and done something good and I'm left feeling a lot better than I did before" – James

ART THERAPY (One-to-one Case Study)

Maeve's Story

Maeve came to Likewise in 2023, a survivor of domestic abuse recently diagnosed with Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. She joined art therapy as a way to maintain her wellbeing while awaiting trauma therapy. Through her sessions, Maeve worked with her therapist on healthy coping strategies and creative ways to express herself, gradually reconnecting with her artistic background.

Art therapy became a safe space for Maeve to process her emotions, building a trusting relationship with her therapist who helped her navigate challenging emotional waves. Previously isolated, she was thrilled to feel safe enough to visit the Likewise Hub regularly—a significant step forward. After completing art therapy, Maeve transitioned to one-on-one support, feeling comfortable with a male support worker visiting her at home weekly—a profound milestone in her journey toward reconnecting with her community.

"Everyone was polite and I felt safe. – I didn't feel safe anywhere [else]" – Maeve

Evolving Our Approach to Measuring Impact

A central challenge in our work is balancing the need to demonstrate measurable outcomes with the nuanced, person-centred approach that defines our services. The push for clear, quantifiable impact often risks oversimplifying the complexity and human depth of the relationships we build with our community. Yet, we recognize the importance of measuring our impact for both internal understanding and external reporting.

To bridge this gap, we've dedicated the past year to developing an outcomes framework that embraces complexity while providing a clear structure for tracking progress. This framework, designed by our Research, Evaluation, and Learning Lead in collaboration with our Research and Evaluation Lead, emerged from in-depth staff interviews, existing data analysis, and a prioritization of our core objectives.

A unique aspect of this framework is its integration of both storytelling and selective key metrics, allowing us to capture the full, authentic impact of our work without losing the nuance of individual journeys. We believe this dual approach will help us honour both the measurable and intangible elements that define our community support.

In the future, we are looking to implement this framework into our regular reporting cycles. This will mean producing a version of the framework every quarter, looking at how trends have developed, in particular where we are having an impact as an organisation and where there is more work to do. The framework also helps to form a general sense of where we have impact as an organisation and how it is evidenced.

Organizational Themes

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

This year, discussions around equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) have become more prominent and focused than ever before. Conversations have naturally surfaced through incidents and team reflections, guiding us to re-evaluate our response to discrimination and work towards a truly inclusive space for our community and staff.

Where disenfranchised community members who find relationships difficult and meet the world in challenging ways they can occasionally speak or act in ways that are discriminatory, we've had to work hard to find ways of meeting and challenging this behaviour without repeating an exclusion, pushing people away or withdrawing support. The question of how we work in a person-centred way, holding acceptance and compassion, while upholding safety and wellbeing and resisting polarisation or othering people is very live.

The team has created an open environment to better understand the personal and professional impact that challenging situations, like microaggressions, can have on both

community members and staff. This year, we hosted a dedicated "Discrimination in the Workplace" day, where staff and support workers joined to discuss practical approaches community support and alignment on how we meet different situations arising with clients.

This initiative has made clear that many EDI challenges we face aren't new; instead, we are building a collective, actionable approach to manage them more effectively. Our work requires a nuanced balance: we must create a welcoming space for all while also confidently challenging discriminatory behaviour. Through training days like these and ongoing upskilling of our team, we are building processes that support both accountability and growth.

Strengthening Partnerships

In last year's learning report, we outlined our evolving approach to partnerships and our commitment to driving system-wide change. One significant shift was the creation of a dedicated team focused on our Core Teams partnership, a change that has greatly supported our staff in their work and allowed us to bring Likewise values into NHS spaces.

Our focus this year has been on maintaining our unique identity while working within the health and care system—a balance between complete independence and full integration. As we prepare for the launch of the Reach Out partnership, we are optimistic about the impact we can achieve by weaving our values into these collaborations. For many team members, Reach Out has moved from a concept to a tangible, impactful initiative, and we look forward to learning from the synergy of Core Teams and Reach Out working in parallel.

Our work with other organizations has shown that we can significantly expand our impact on both people and the broader system. The Core Teams project, for example, has allowed us to bridge the clinical and non-clinical worlds, bringing the strengths of both into collaborative settings. Meanwhile, the single point of access through Reach Out will transform how people connect with a range of services in Camden, setting a new standard for the borough. Sharing our insights and learnings from this partnership will be a priority in the coming year, as we continue to push for innovative, person-centred support systems.

"We work with people who want to receive medical support, there's a massive benefit in plugging them into multi-disciplinary working. I had a client who needed input from a psychiatrist, my support would not have been as valuable if we were not in the NHS partnership" – Core Team Support Worker

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