Likewise

Learning Report 2025



Our theory of change

To help ground the rest of this report, we've included a short version of our Theory of Change — how we understand change to happen at Likewise, and the beliefs and practices that shape our work.

Our Purpose

We exist to help people navigate life in all its complexity by creating compassionate, human-centred relationships and spaces where people feel valued, accepted and connected.

Our Approach

- Relational Support grounded in acceptance and genuine connection.
- Whole-Person Practice that stays flexible and responsive to real life.
- Embedded Community that fosters belonging and shared ownership.
- People Development through learning, reflection and enquiry.
- System Leadership that models human-centred, learning-based practice.

Our Beliefs

- People are not problems to be solved — we see people in their fullness.
- Change happens in relationship — trust and connection enable growth.
- Context matters — people's lives shape what support looks like.
- Organisations should be human too — honest, open, learning cultures create better care.

Our Outcomes

- **For Individuals:** increased wellbeing, trust and agency.
- **For Communities:** more belonging, mutual support and local capacity.
- **For Systems:** more adaptive, relational, human-centred practice.

Our Impact

Support is human, community is strengthened, and systems reflect real life.

Our reach and impact

Key numbers

The numbers this year show clear evidence of the difference that relational support makes for the people we work with. In one-to-one services, 81% of Floating Support clients told us they were better able to manage their mental health, and 60% of Support & Connect clients saw a reduced risk of crisis admission.

These outcomes sit alongside the stories shared later in this report - people describing feeling more able to cope, less isolated, and better supported to navigate housing, benefits and daily life.

Across our community programme, the impact is equally visible. Even with reduced hours and sessions (mostly due to health and safety closures out of our control), participation and attendance increased. In addition, the vast majority of members reported strong benefits: 95% said the hub brings a sense of belonging, and 85% felt activities improved their wellbeing.

These findings are echoed throughout the quotes in this report—people talking about feeling respected, building friendships, becoming more confident, or simply having somewhere they can "be" without judgement.

ONE-TO-ONE SUPPORT

(including Support and Connect estimate)

Hours of support delivered

6,668 (-0.5%)

Number of sessions

3,482 (-1.5%)

Unique participants

299

- **81% of Floating Support clients** reported better managing their mental health.
- **60% of Support and Connect clients** with a reduced risk of crisis admission.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMME

Hours

1,078 (-16.3%)

Sessions

821 (-13.9%)

Unique participants

195 (+18.2%)

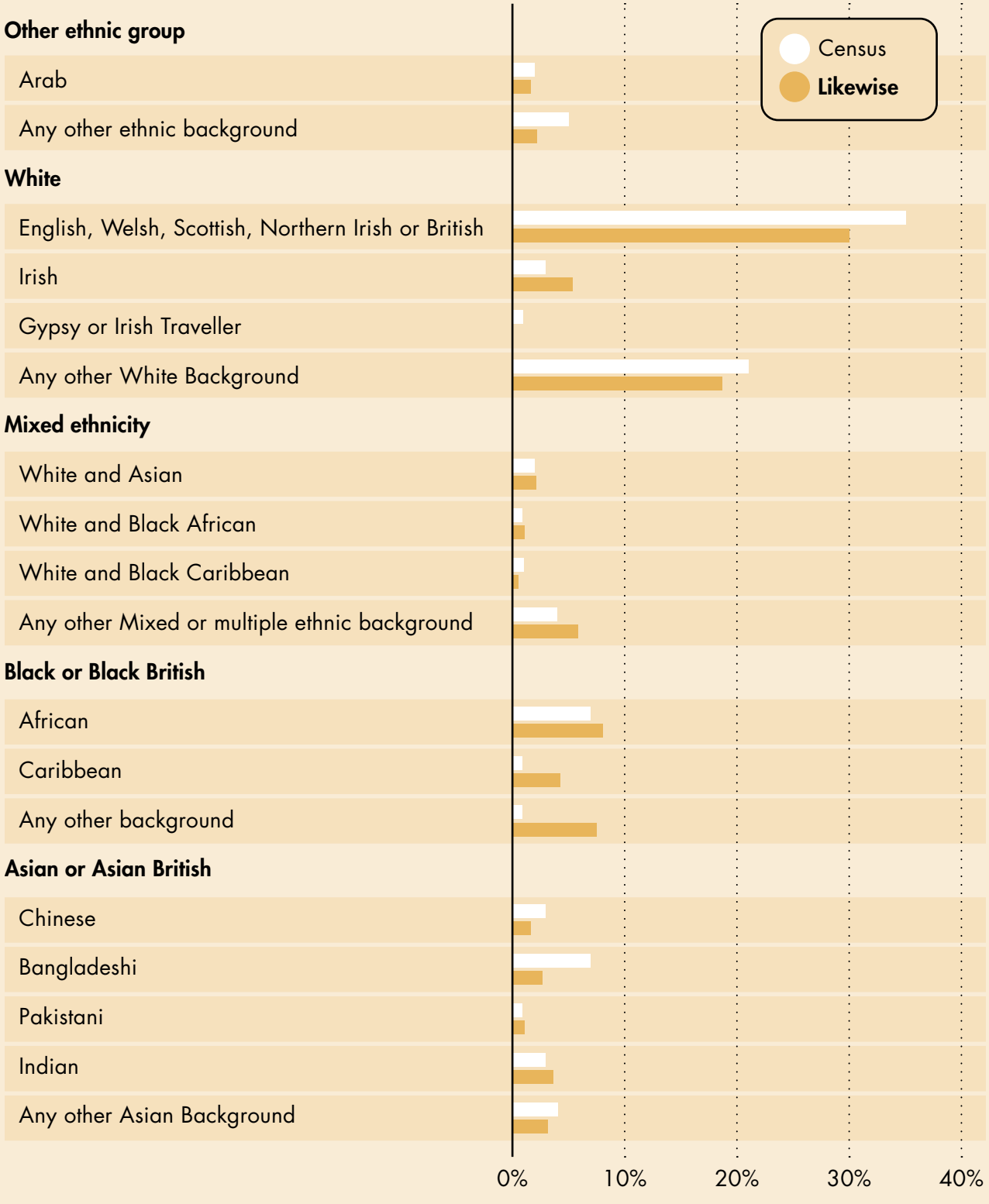
Attendances

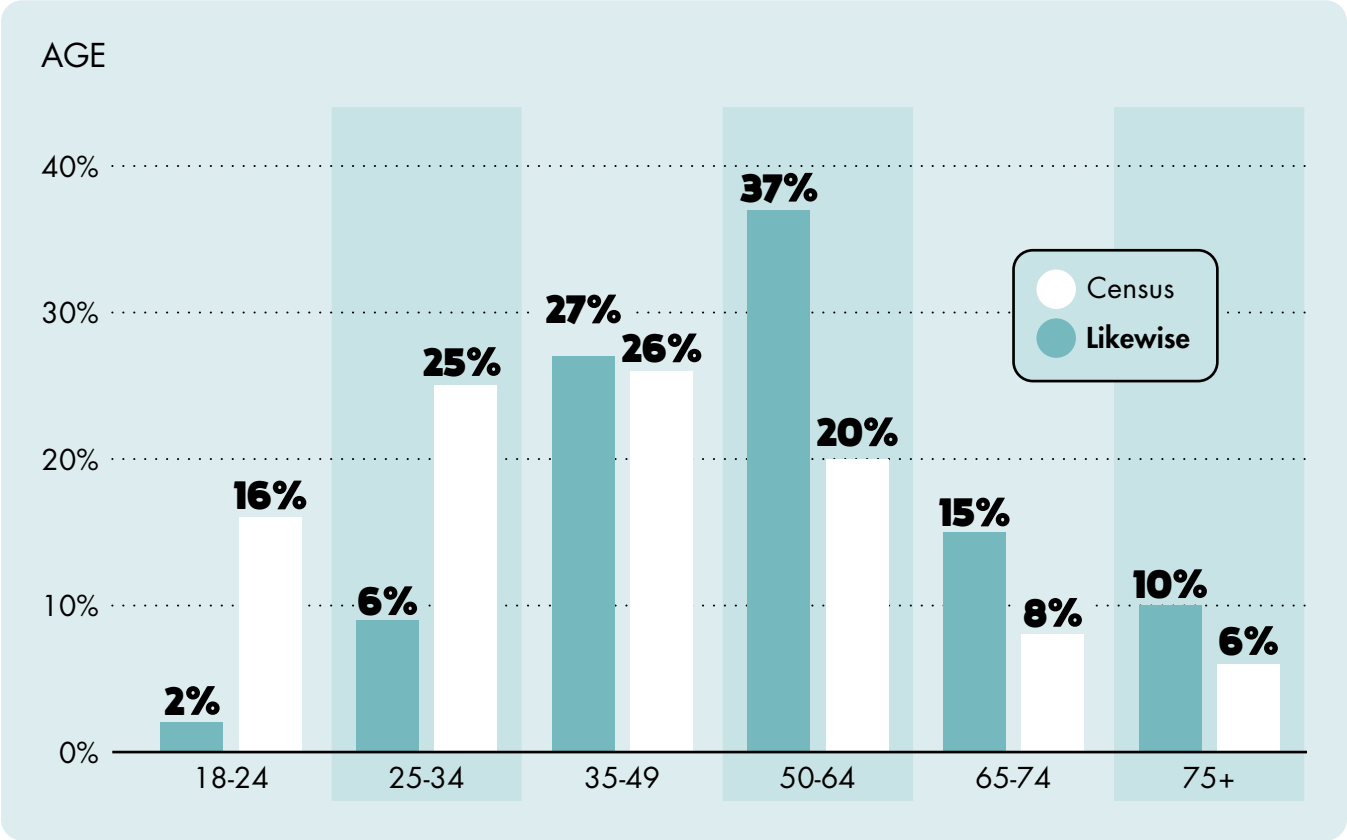
2,895 (+21%)

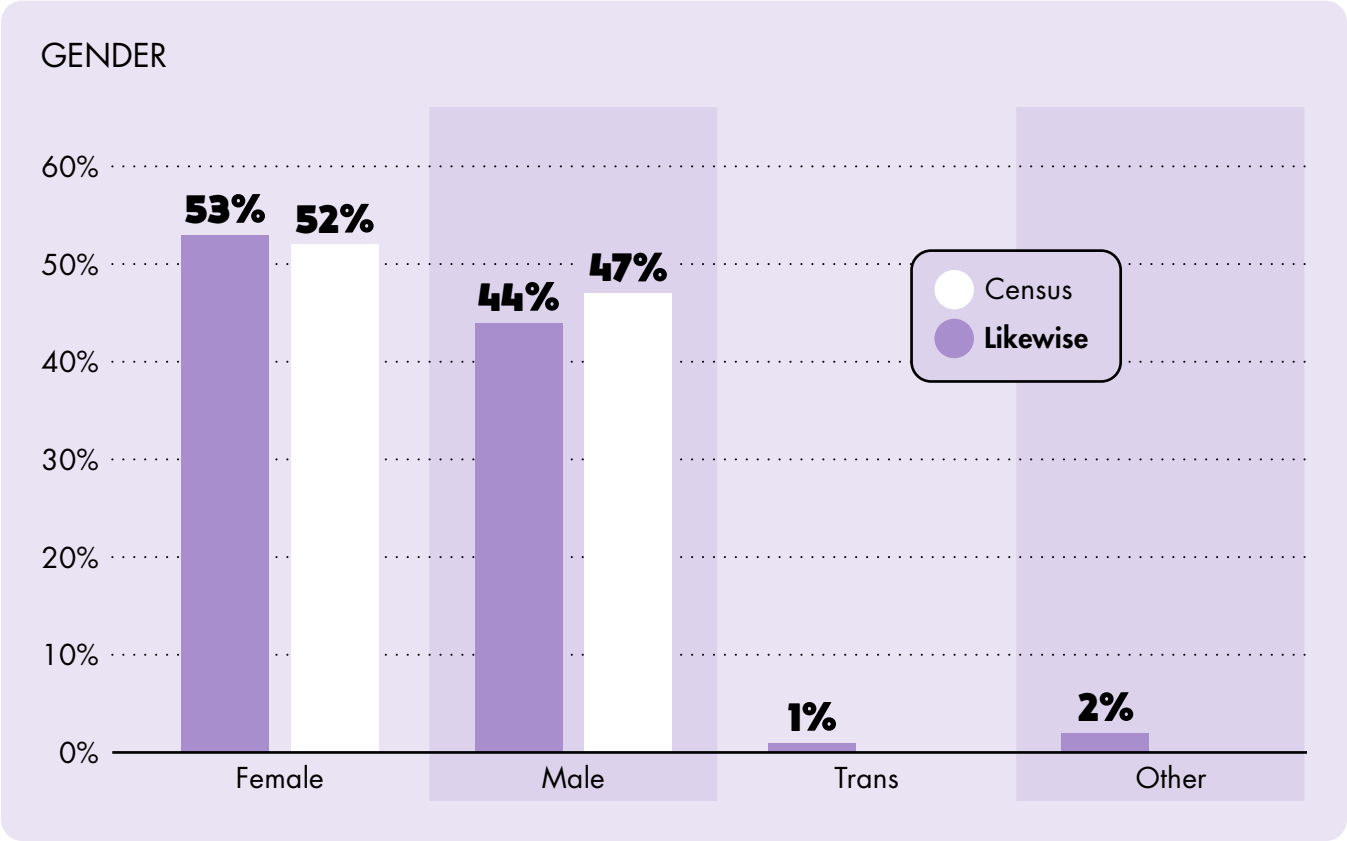
- **95% of members** said that coming to our hub brings a feeling of belonging.
- **85% of members** felt participating improved their wellbeing.

Who we work with - demographics

ETHNICITY




AGE
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
2%
16%
6%
25%
27%
26%
37%
20%
15%
8%
10%
6%
18-24
25-34
35-49
50-64
65-74
75+
Census
Likewise


GENDER
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
53%
52%
44%
47%
1%
2%
Female
Male
Trans
Other
Census
Likewise

Developing a new Strategic Frame

In 2024/25, the whole organisation took part in creating a new Strategic Frame for Likewise. We used a bow-tie process — moving between wide listening and focused sense-making — to ensure the Frame genuinely reflected the voices, insight and experience of the whole team.

We began by gathering reflections and ideas from staff across roles. Our Leads Circle then worked with this material to identify themes and emerging priorities. We took these back out to the whole organisation for deeper conversation and refinement, before returning to the Leads Circle to shape and finalise the Strategic Frame.

What the Strategic Frame is for

The Strategic Frame gives us a shared way of understanding who we are and how we work. It isn't a rigid plan - it acts as an anchor that helps us stay true to our purpose while responding flexibly to what people and communities need. It will support clearer decision-making, alignment across teams, and stronger accountability to the values and ways of working that define Likewise.

We will use the Strategic Frame through a practice of dynamic steering — continually tuning into feedback, noticing where energy and tension sit, and making small, timely adjustments rather than following a fixed plan. This ensures the Frame stays alive in the organisation, guiding us as we sense and respond to what is emerging in our work, our teams, and our community.

Key Elements of the Strategic Frame

The full version of our Strategic Frame can be found on our website

OUR PURPOSE

Likewise exists to create compassionate, human-centred relationships and spaces where people feel valued, accepted, and connected. We support often isolated or excluded people by building authentic relationships and community together. Through these connections, we nurture wellbeing and inspire systemic change toward a more human, empathetic, and inclusive health and social care system with people at the heart.

OUR VISION

A vibrant, welcoming community where everyone feels at home. A place where people from all walks of life come together — as neighbours and community members — building real connections, sharing support, and growing alongside each other.

Our dream is a space that runs on the energy and care of the people who fill it, where the community truly owns it. By sharing what we do and standing for change, we hope to spark a shift toward a kinder, more human way of supporting each other.

Together, we're rediscovering what it means to belong, connect and be there for each other.

OUR FOCUS

Because there's an epidemic of loneliness, isolation, mental health struggles and people not coping, we work in Camden to support often vulnerable adults find connection, community, care and practical support in order that people live happier lives and don't end up in crisis.

Over the years we've supported people experiencing homelessness, people who are refugees or seeking asylum, people experiencing mental health challenges or who have social care needs, and people feeling lonely, isolated or excluded.

Today much of our focus is on supporting people facing enduring mental health challenges, ongoing social care needs, and those who feel socially isolated or vulnerable. We offer preventative, community-based, and holistic approaches in a landscape that can be reactive, clinical, or highly specialised.

We're here for people if they want to connect over a cup of tea, join a group, see an art therapist or sit quietly in our community garden.

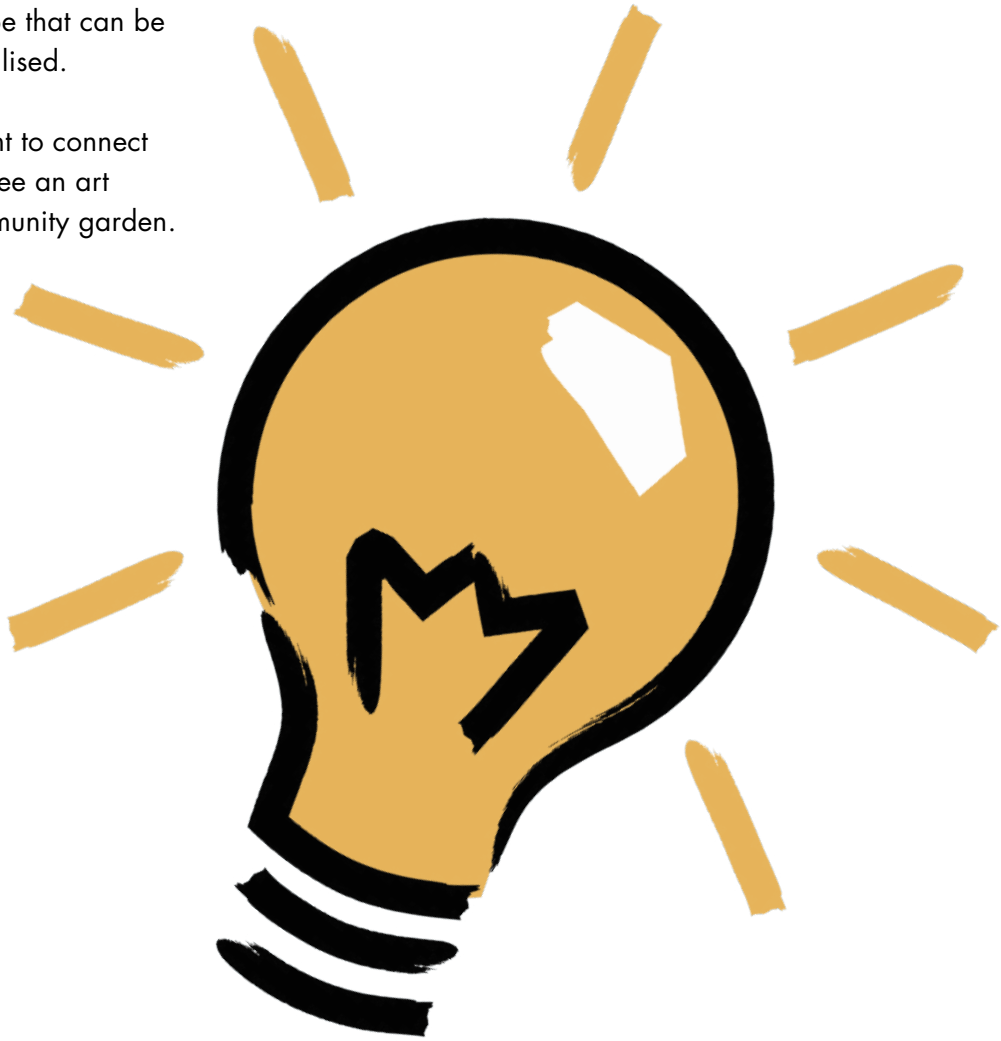
STRATEGIC CORNERSTONES

Providing one-to-one support through human centred relationships where we're alongside people as they navigate life, cultivate wellbeing and learn.

Evolving and building community spaces, places and relationships, focussed on belonging, learning together and wellbeing.

Collaborating and working in partnerships where we learn, act together and model human centred services for greater impact, influence and sustainable change.

Being a human, relationship centred organisation where we take good care of each other. We're adaptable, responsive, dynamic and always learning.



One-to-one support services

This year, our one-to-one services have continued to deliver at similar levels to last year, demonstrating our continued impact within our community. Behind these numbers, we have invested significant effort and time into improving, expanding, and evolving our one-to-one offer to better meet our community's needs.

On our 6-8 Session Service, last year marked the launch of Reach Out Camden, four charity organisations in Camden collaborating to form a single point of access for referrals, supporting an easier access to community mental health services and support. This past year, we have supported the navigation process, which discusses options with people who are referred in a relational way to ensure they can find the right service within Reach Out. This has supported a referral process for community services which is more cohesive, compassionate, and human.

Within our NHS partnerships, we have continued to provide vital one-to-one support, which is also able to meet both emotional and practical needs, supporting people through challenging times and also helping them access support such as benefits, funding and housing.

We are also expanding the Community Development roles we hold within the team focussed on building links between clinical services and local communities. In particular this work looks to build trust between communities and the NHS to support a diverse range of people being able to access the care they need. This year, we have created a new peer support group for those leaving one-to-one services in the NHS so that they can land back into the community. Discharge is commonly identified in services review as a gap in care across the borough, so our 16-week peer groups will address this with a co-created, empathetic and supportive space.

> *"I'm absolutely delighted with my support worker. Yes, they're just the kind of person that I feel is good for me. They're always willing to listen to a suggestion."*
> *– client*



We've also seen more variation in the support people are seeking from our one-to-one services. Increasingly, people are receiving a more diverse combination of practical, social, and emotional support. This means we've been succeeding at meeting different needs as they appear, rather than only tending to one aspect of the lives of the people we work with.

We've been able to respond to this due to our flexible and holistic approach. The cost-of-living crisis continues to impact people's lives and the kind of help they are seeking from both an emotional and practical perspective.

Our one-to-one impact

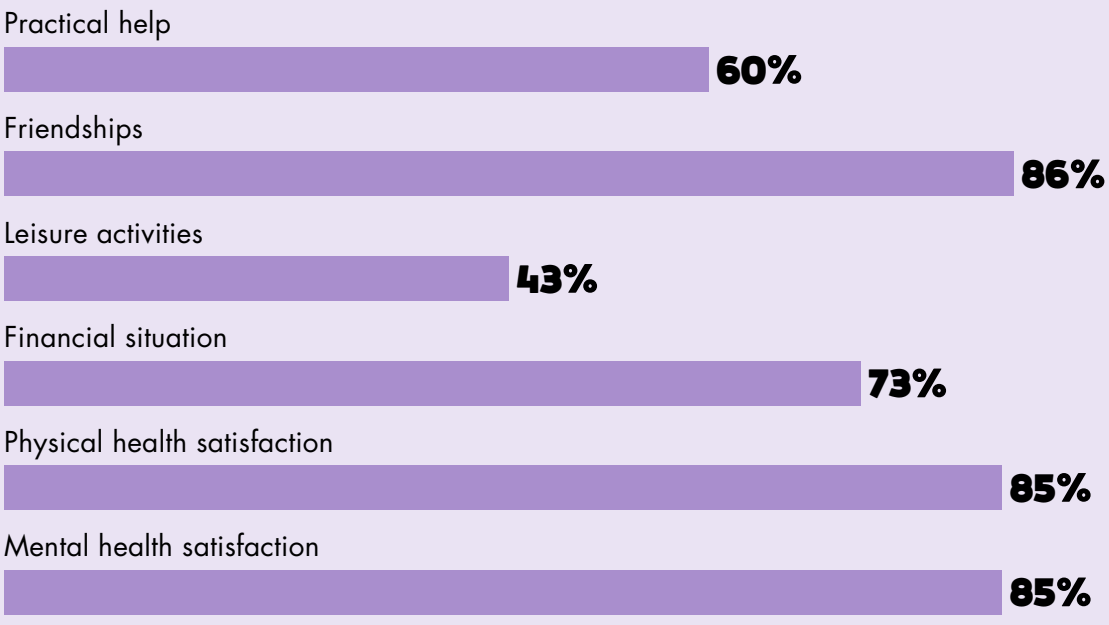
The DIALOG scale is a tool we use to observe changes in the lives of the people we work with. It gives an overview of the key areas of someone's life where we're making a difference. On our 6-8 session service, we see that most people report either stability or improvement in the majority of domains.

Many of the people we work with are at risk of progressing to a mental health crisis meaning improvement is not always possible in the time we work with them. 71% of those referred into support and connect in Kentish Town between Jan-April 2024 demonstrated a stabilised or reduced risk of crisis admission. 60% have demonstrated a reduced crisis risk. Our ability to support people to stabilise their wellbeing, avoid a hospital admission, maintain independence and begin working to improving mental health is important as it helps people to avoid the distress around crisis and hospital admission. Importantly this also reduces the demand and cost for crisis services within Camden.

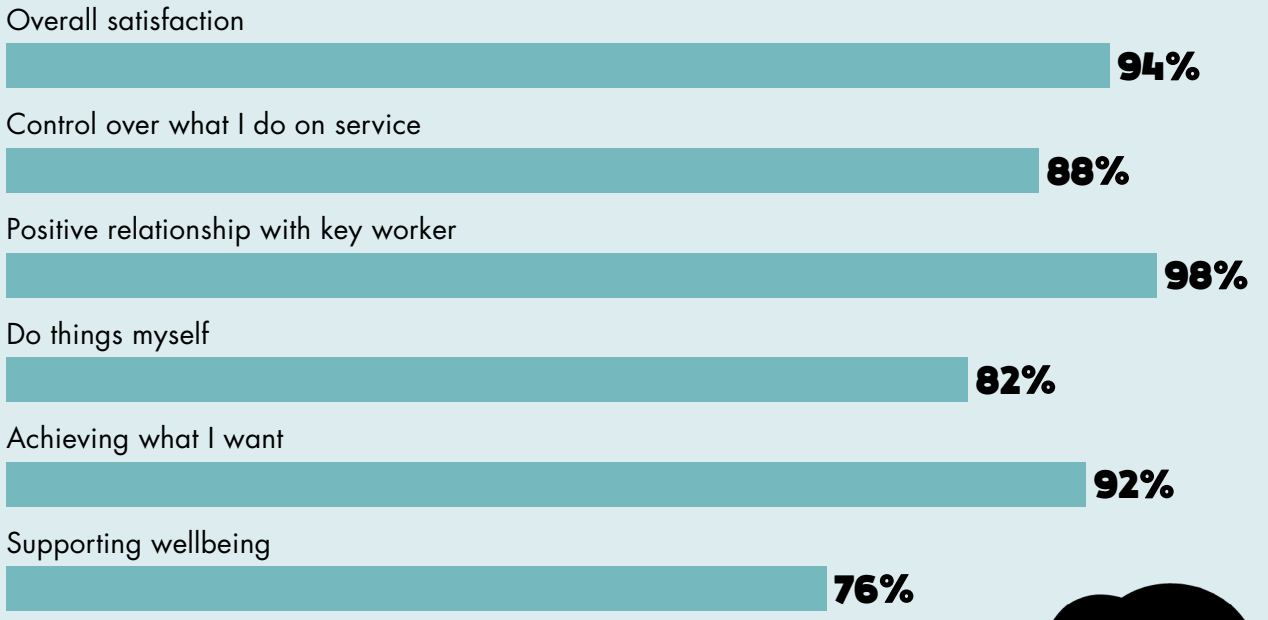
The DIALOG areas covering health, finances and friendships have some of the greatest gains for the people we work with, demonstrating the tangible impact of our support. We also collect feedback from people directly. Our data for this past year show high levels of satisfaction with the service, with the quality of relationships and overall experience of the support being singled out for praise. This reinforces the value of our person-centred approach where individuals are able to shape the support they receive.

However, this data can also highlight the complexity of our work. Improvements to overall wellbeing had the lowest number of positive responses, though still with 76% providing positive responses. Each person has different aims and ambitions for our one-to-one support. For some, maintaining independence and a level of stability comes first, where improving wellbeing may not be the immediate goal or a realistic expectation. Recognising this nuance is key when thinking about the impact of our services.

PEOPLE ON THE 6-8 SERVICE REPORTING STABILISATION OR POSITIVE CHANGE



FEEDBACK FORM SATISFACTION RATES

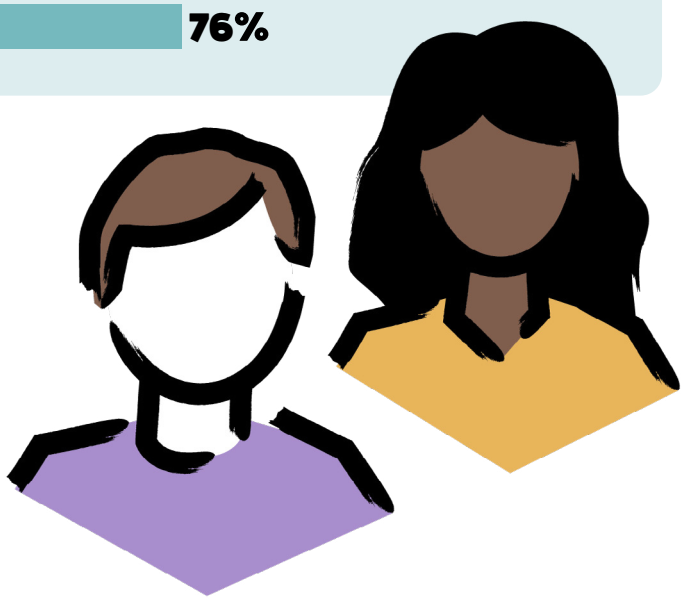


FLOATING SUPPORT

Floating Support continues to make a tangible difference for people living with long-term, complex mental health challenges.

This year's data shows that 81% of people felt better able to manage their mental health, 89% achieved what they wanted through support, and 70% felt more able to do things for themselves. People repeatedly emphasise the value of having someone consistently alongside them — someone who listens, shows up, and supports both practical needs and emotional wellbeing. As one person shared, "I don't feel like I am alone in my mental health challenges." Another highlighted the depth of trust built through the service: "I feel protected. I feel safe. I know that whatever I'm talking about is confidential… This helps prevent relapse."

The support also plays a crucial role in reducing isolation and enabling people to stay connected to daily life. Many describe Floating Support as their primary point of human connection, with one

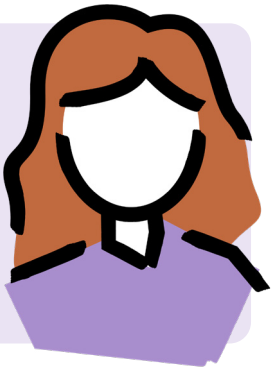


person sharing, "I don't see anyone except for this service, so it's important for connection." The mix of emotional, social and practical support — from navigating benefits and housing to managing paperwork or simply having someone to talk to — creates real movement in people's lives. As one long-term client put it, "Likewise is all I have… it's like the family that I don't have." These relationships, and the consistency behind them, demonstrate the profound value of Floating Support as a stabilising, life-improving part of people's week.

Selection of quotes from one-to-one clients

The amount of support that has been given to me has been fantastic… I cannot complain with the support I have received. The support has allowed me to talk about my situation and relieve some pressure."

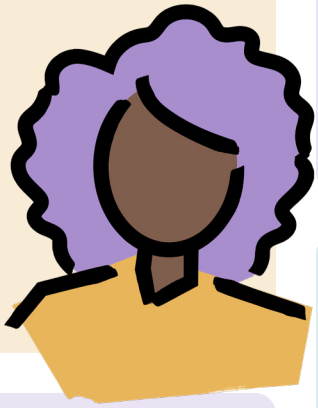
It has been a lifesaver - it's given me people to talk to, friendships, things to do in the day."



Wasn't sure how to approach problems and Likewise has helped me to do that. Having a keyworker was like having a guiding light leading the way. It helped to take my anxiety away, I am not always sure how to ask for help."

My experience was a lifeline for me in one of the hardest times of my life. I don't know what I would have done without it."

My support worker has been very supportive of me, and very helpful. Talking to them has allowed me to open my mind up to other possibilities and new ways of thinking about things."



My Support Worker's positive support and encouragement throughout was deeply impactful. She provided a safe space, she was open and non-judgemental. It truly felt like a safe space and this is not something that I have always felt when engaging with other services."

My worker's calmness 'washes over me'… Usually I dread professionals coming round. But I don't with Likewise - you're more laidback, less in your face'. "

My Support Worker never gave up on me… she is the first person in my life who stuck around and made sure I was ok. I have never in my life felt care or love like it."



Case study

Anton was referred by a psychiatrist to the 'Support & Connect' programme within the NHS Core Teams. Anton engaged in 12 sessions of one-to-one support with two different support workers at Likewise. He really appreciated the way they approached the sessions with openness, with Anton able to guide the focus of the sessions.

For Anton, housing was the most pressing issue on his mind when he started Support & Connect. Although he didn't receive the decision he was hoping for within his recent accommodation review, "the fact that my Likewise support worker was there to support me and progress the case was really valuable."

Anton feels that the Support & Connect sessions have had a significant and positive impact on his well-being and had contributed to him stopping self-harming. The Support & Connect sessions helped Anton remove a sense of despair, bring in hope and try to integrate other viewpoints into the internally focused and negative cycle of thoughts he was experiencing. Anton compared it to feeling like a "knotted necklace, which Likewise helped to slowly unknot."

Anton had a really positive relationship with his support-worker. He felt welcomed and valued by them and appreciated their open and engaging sessions.

> *To make you feel like you are valuable to someone is really important."*

> *It really helps to find some sort of banter and a back and forth in conversation."*

Anton appreciated the way his support-worker recognised parts of him that made him unique and valuable and then reflected it back to him.

> *The support-worker noticed my kindness, pointed it out to me, and nurtured and watered it like a flower."*

The flexibility of the sessions also resonated with Anton, in terms of meeting up and potential for rescheduling, which contrasts to other mental health services which can be more rigid. "It felt like Likewise could adapt to my needs, as opposed to forcing me into a mold."

> *Support & Connect sessions were definitely worthwhile for me, they are a way of reflecting on yourself and dealing with things that you might feel you can't deal with. It opened me up to thinking about different possible paths of my situation, without forcing it."*



Community programme



Our community programme has continued to offer crucial support and a place of belonging and connection for a growing number of people in Camden.

Through our community sessions we've been able to respond to wide ranging needs. Life Admin Mornings have supported people through the cost-of-living crisis by supporting with benefits, job, and housing applications. While sessions like our Garden Guardians activity have been able to provide a therapeutic space for them to connect and learn. A contributing factor to our growth this year has been our work to create a more intentional welcome process for new attendees. We have streamlined our sign-up form and introduced clearer guidance on how new members can be introduced, ensuring that they find the right activity for their needs and are able to land in a new environment with more ease and care.

Partnership working has been another growing part of our community programmes.

We have continued to collaborate with FEAST to provide free hot meals, serving 530 free meals across the year. 60% of those who attend our meals experience food insecurity and often eat meals alone. The opportunity to connect with others over food builds connection as well as supporting the nutrition of our community.

As well as partnering with organisations like The Zen Project and Veolia to run community events at our hub, we've continued out collaboration with Mind in Camden.

Coordinating our food provision with them has meant there is a hot meal available for the community on every day of the week between the two organisations.

Our Impact

85%
satisfaction rate

POSITIVE RESPONSES TO THE COMMUNITY FEEDBACK FORM

Attending community sessions improves my belonging
95%

I feel accepted and can engage with sessions in a way that suits me
90%

Attending community sessions has had a positive impact on my wellbeing
85%

Our feedback forms indicate the impact the community programme is having within our community. Having somewhere to experience a sense of belonging as an antidote to isolation and loneliness is critical for wellbeing, and 95% of attendee said that coming to sessions at the hub brings a feeling of belonging. 85% of attendees felt participating in activities at the hub improved their wellbeing. We have also noticed many responses from our community referencing how open our group offer is and how it provides a space for people to simply 'be'.

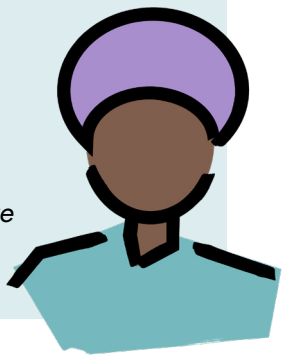
> *I've learnt a lot about the people that come here from conversations, they're great to talk to. And I've learnt about the cooking too. The togetherness too - how to be in a community. I've learnt to be less shy, and how to talk to people."*

> *The people are friendly and there's a togetherness. We can talk to each other about things, what we do and everything."*

> *The hub helps people, helps me with admin, helps the community, we can meet people, play games, eat food or drink coffee."*

> *Coming here helps me feel independent. I've been coming on my own rather than needed someone to come with me. I also speak another language at home and coming here helps me improve my English. I talk about myself here more than I do elsewhere."*

> *It's nice because I socialise, I sort of know everyone now. I feel good when I come home. I feel respected here and more so than out there in the community."*



Baking Case study

The Baking for Wellbeing group has been going since 2019 and is led by Agnieszka; baker and founder of Rise and Shine Bakery, through which she offers bespoke classes focusing on the wellbeing benefits of baking.Agnieszka feels really positive about how the group Ahas evolved to be a space of community and cohesion for members. Although most members aren't easily able to practice their new baking skills at home, due to living in temporary accommodation or not having access to facilities, it's the whole process of baking together that enables people to connect and be themselves in a warm and safe space.

> *Through baking and coming regularly, they feel comfortable with each other, so they open up and talk about private stuff, which was not the case when we started of course... It's through baking and eating something delicious at the end of it, and sitting with a cup of tea and just talking; a cake is like an excuse for them, it's an outlet. It's a way to expressing their daily thoughts, or silly banter... It's the community feel and spirit."*

As a group they find a way of understanding and accommodating everyone's different tastes and preferences for what's on the menu and being flexible to people's different needs. Through facilitating and leading the group, Agnieszka is learning a lot about other people's realities and how to navigate difference.

> *It's a learning two-way street. I'm also learning about various mental health conditions through listening to some clients who just openly state how it affects their life, and how hard or not hard they find it, and how every day is different. And I'm amazed sometimes about their openness and the seeming ease with which they express what they're going through."*

Agnieszka is supported by one of the regular members of the group who reached out and asked if she could start to regularly come early and help set up. This participant frequently tells Agnieszka that "Likewise saved {her} life."

> *It's incredible to be a part of a charity that's created that space."*

Due to the popularity of the group and growing demand, a second group has recently been set up and will be meeting each fortnightly.



Reflections on relational working

At Likewise, our way of working is central to what makes the support we provide across our services different. A central facet of this is our approach to putting relationship first, working in a way that prioritises belonging, acceptance and learning together. Research from the Relationship Project shows that "relationship first working and a focus on fostering social connection can lead to services that can have greater impact as they are more rooted in the lives of the people they work with. For instance, they reference that in Frome, work on building social connections led to a 14% drop in hospital admissions, while Great Yarmouth Council have been able to reduce the housing waiting list by 95% by developing a relationally centred approach to tackling it. This year's learning report has given us the opportunity to reflect on our relational approach, its impact, how it has evolved, and what the future may look like. To inform this, in-depth



WHY RELATIONAL WORKING?

Our work with our community starts from a place of the context of their life, working relationally with them to achieve outcomes that are important to their lives. There are three key reasons we work in this way.

- It allows us to work in a context sensitive way, Human Learning Systems (www.humanlearning.systems) suggests that services "should embrace the complex reality of the 21st century world" and prioritise learning over delivery itself. Working relationally, allows us to understand other perspectives and co-create support which is relevant to the person we're working with.

- It helps the impact of our work sustain as we believe that it is derived from a network of relationships, services and factors, not one service in isolation. Relationships can act as a supportive structure to navigate these systems, helping to build resilience and belonging.

- We believe that relationships help us build change. Robert Waldinger describes relationships as a "scientific necessity", rather than a nice to have sentiment. We have seen how working in a person-centred way enables better results for our community and supports stronger engagement with our services.

Benefits

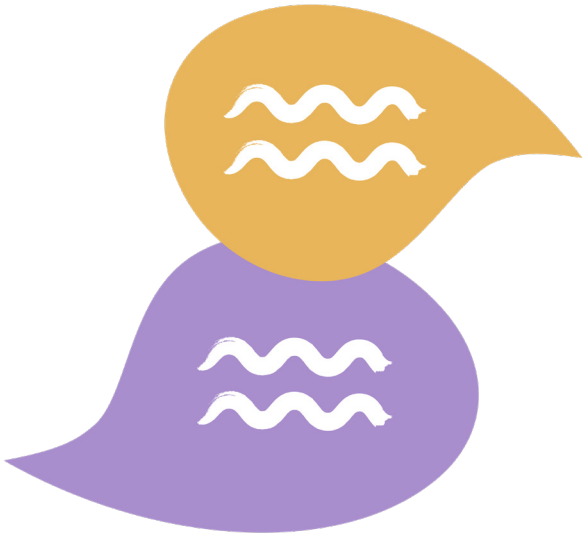
Our way of working allows us to have impact that other services may struggle to have. A recurring theme in conversations with staff was the importance of being able to build trust. For many of the people we work with, we are the most trusted service they engage with. There are many examples of this enabling us to be a bridge between the community and other services. For example, we supported a community member struggling with hoarding to work constructively with the council and fire safety teams, facilitating conversations between the two.

We're able to take positive risks and experiment in unique ways. Staff described how we're able to take action in practical and relational ways without being constrained by rigid processes. Internally, our way of working has supported a culture where staff are given the space to reflect, share challenges collectively, and continue to evolve our practice. This space to reflect allows us to respond to changing needs and tailor our support to individuals

Barriers

Working in such an intentional person-centred, relationship-first way within the wider system in Camden can be challenging. We often have to navigate impersonal processes or ways of working that clash with the values we bring to the work. Acting as a conduit between people and statutory services can sometimes require us to adapt our approach to support a positive outcome for our clients, for instance by not just working directly with them, but also advocating for them in external meetings or bringing multiple professionals together.

Another challenge is balancing the depth and breadth of the support we provide. The depth of care and attention relational work requires can make it difficult to divide time equitably across all those seeking support.

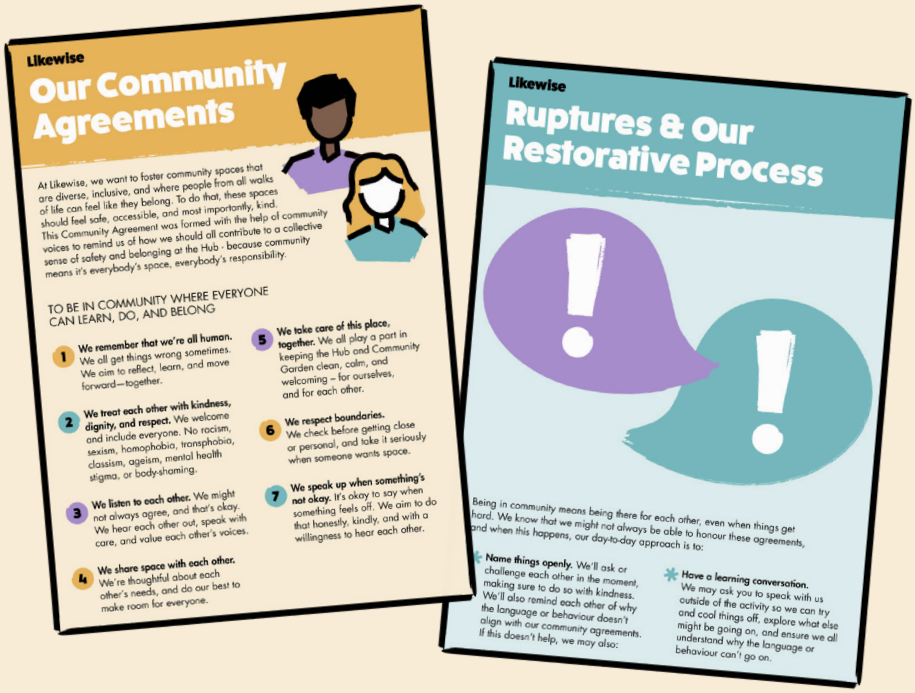


How our approach has evolved

Over the past few years, our relational practice has become more intentional and structured:

- We've moved from a very emergent approach to one more readily supported by clear frameworks, like having explicit community agreements and guidance on working with both rupture and repair in relationships.
- We've become more pragmatic, balancing both reflection and action through the forming of working groups on specific organisational challenges.
- In order to better provide the support structure needed for the work we do, we've formally constituted a "Leads Circle" of roles with accountability for stewarding the conditions that allow for relational work. This group supports a high trust, high autonomy culture in the team, aiming to allow responsive, flexible support work while taking care of the wellbeing of the delivery teams.
- Our client work is the most collaborative it has been, with staff often working together rather than holding cases individually, allowing for more intentional and considered support.

OUR COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS AND RESTORATIVE PROCESS



Our Community Agreements

Our community agreements set the frame for the kind of relationships that make a diverse community possible. We believe that communities are best able to thrive when there are explicit relational agreements that help people navigate spaces, and understand the values that are important to that community. Co-creating these agreements with community members, and then being able to highlight them for everyone, provides a framework for conversations about the kind of community we aspire to, the ways we all want to belong together.

Our Restorative Process

People getting things wrong, strained relationships, difference and conflict are all inevitable parts of people coming together in community. Having norms and processes for navigating this is essential. Working with conflict in a way that is relational, restorative, non-punitive and centred on learning, we can build a strong and cohesive community which is better able to hold and include difference.

With this in mind, we have recently launched a formalised process to working with "rupture and repair" in relationships with community members. This covers how we approach conflict or when community agreements are broken, and when/how people might be asked to take a break from the community space. With an emphasis on non-exclusion, our process includes guided learning conversations, times when taking a break might be necessary, as well as a focus on creating the space for a phased return to our community space following more serious ruptures.

This was developed following conversations with community members around conflict, and staff meetings, landing on a process that centres the needs of the broader community, as well as the individuals that it is made up of.

Current Learning Edges

The key questions showing how our approach has been evolving are:

- How do we keep adapting within wider systems without diluting our "humans alongside humans" approach rooted in relationship and mutuality?
- How do we build more structure into one-to-one work to support consistency and provide greater support for staff while maintaining our ability to put relationship first, make space for emergence and complexity?
- How can we continue to experiment in community work while operating with clearer agreements and processes? Creating the space for getting things wrong and tailoring our way of working to each community member whilst still having unifying policies and agreements?

Learning for other organisations

For organisations seeking to work in a similar way some insights stand out:

- Relational work is effective and rewarding, but it takes time, space, and intention to do it well.
- Flexibility is very important, being pragmatic and being comfortable with uncertainty makes the approach impactful.
- Being able to have the space and support to process challenging situations is pivotal, at Likewise we build in the space to reflect and process in smaller groups and as a team.
- How we recruit into the team matters greatly for how we're able to cultivate our way of working. We integrate and centre the values, mindset and a level of relational resilience needed to meet complexity, hold ambiguity, and work with autonomy in our recruitment.
- The depth of care required can lead to resources being stretched, but the outcomes often justify the effort. We make this sustainable by embedding reflection into our regular meeting spaces, to unpack and unpick the emotional load of the work. We also build a mutually supportive culture where all team members can turn to each other to process their experience of the work, be supported and learn together.
- Building strong relationship with the wider system is essential for supporting individuals and advocating for a more person-centred model of care.

Looking Ahead

There is a great deal of optimism about the future of our relational approach. While the context and applications may change, there's a strong belief that the core practice will remain central. We expect to see more structures introduced into the one-to-one work, alongside the continued space for experimentation in community projects, ensuring our staff and community are supported in ways that are relational, values-led, and sustainable.

Likewise

www.likewise.org.uk | 020 7278 4437
Registered Charity in England and Wales (No.1109639)