

# DATA TO DIFFERENCE: SMARTER SMALL GRANTS FOR VCSE ORGANISATIONS

## LIVE WELL WAKEFIELD

Wakefield Public Health commission the Live Well Wakefield Social Prescribing and Self-Management Service (LWW) to **promote resident health and wellbeing** through a **person-centred approach**, helping individuals recognise **what supports their wellbeing** and facilitating **access to tailored support** and interventions.

LWW Social Prescribing Advisors use a **Social Prescribing Tool (SPT)**, endorsed by **NICE** and based on the New Economics Foundation **Five Ways to Wellbeing**, to assess individual wellbeing and monitor progress via a single wellbeing score. The tool identifies **non-clinical needs**, **intervention outcomes**, and **highlights barriers** to accessing health & wellbeing support.

## LIVE WELL SMALL GRANTS

Established in 2017, the Live Well Small Grants Fund supports VCSE organisations to deliver projects that improve health and wellbeing. It takes an **asset-based approach** focusing on addressing **gaps identified in local provision**. To date, the fund has delivered **17 funding rounds**, distributing over **£1 million** to **100+ organisations** and supported over **200 projects**.

**THE PROBLEM:** Broad social prescribing criteria led to **high application volumes**, **resource inefficiencies**, **applicant frustration**, and the short-term funding made it **difficult to build sustainable relationships**. Although many positive outcomes were achieved, varied approaches made it difficult to capture consistent learning and define best practice.

## THE SYSTEM INTELLIGENCE GROUP (SIG) PROCESS

### DATA ANALYSIS

Every six months, the LWW service data is imported into a Power BI dashboard to analyse and visualise the previous two quarters' data.

Unmet needs across the district are identified by analysing clients who present with a need at the start of the service (via the SPT) and continue to have that need at discharge, highlighting gaps in available community resources.

The data is also analysed through an inequality lens to find groups with higher unmet needs than the district average.



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### SYSTEM INTELLIGENCE WORKSHOP

Two to three key themes are brought to a SIG workshop in which LWW Social Prescribing Advisors are invited to suggest potential reasons and solutions to the unmet needs. This collaborative approach encourages dialogue and diverse perspectives, leading to innovative solutions.

LWW Social Prescribing Advisors provide insights from their client experiences, which are used by the team and partners to reflect on:

1. Successes and effective strategies
2. Challenges and gaps
3. Anticipatory challenges and issues
4. Priorities to inform the next SIG meeting



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### REVIEW OF THEMES

The LWW team review the key themes from the dashboard. LWW Social Prescribing Advisors bring their knowledge of challenges within the district, barriers in neighbourhoods and service gaps to add further context to the themes.

LWW Social Prescribing Advisors draw on their client interactions to help determine whether the themes highlighted in the data reflect genuine, ongoing issues or whether they may be influenced by short-term fluctuations, changes in referral patterns, or local service availability.



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### INSIGHT-LED DECISIONS

Workshop insights are shared at the SIG meeting, enabling local commissioners and grant managers to make informed decisions on service commissioning and the most appropriate Live Well Small Grants theme(s).

By harnessing the insights gained from data analysis and frontline experience, the SIG meeting develops a thematic approach to the Live Well Small Grants that aims to address the community barriers in accessing support and interventions to support health and wellbeing.

The ongoing review of the small grants process ensures that the programme remains adaptable and responsive, leading to improved health outcomes for communities.



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### IMPACT

Implementing a more structured analysis and review cycle in this format has strengthened both the understanding of unmet need and the ability of the local VCSE sector to help respond to it. The process not only highlights **where** unmet need exists, but **why**.

By integrating data-driven insights with frontline experience, the Live Well Small Grants Fund addresses current health inequalities and builds a robust foundation for future initiatives.



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## LEARNING AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

### CASE STUDY

#### Example of how system intelligence shaped commissioning

- A lack of support was highlighted for neurodivergent adults in Wakefield.
- Targeted theme resulted in seven projects receiving a share of circa £60k.
- "Support Spectrum" was funded - a dedicated 2-year counselling offer for neurodivergent adults.
- 14 neurodivergent adults accessed tailored counselling (116 sessions).
- Outcomes included increased confidence, reduced social isolation, and improved wellbeing for participants.

### NEXT STEPS

- Involve LWW clients for feedback on identified themes.
- Create short summaries and infographics to highlight unmet needs in neighbourhoods, sharing with VCSE partners for innovative grant bidding.
- Encourage collaboration amongst VCSE organisations to increase referrals and reduce access barriers.
- Involve VCSE providers in the System Intelligence Group process to allow for their input on challenges and help identify what additional support is required for those with unmet needs.