



Healthy, Warm and Well: End-of-grant report

Leeds Older People's Forum
November 2023



Introduction

Leeds Older People's Forum (LOPF) received funding from Leeds City Council to provide over £72,000 in grants to third sector organisations in Leeds. The purpose was to help meet immediate pressures and problems older people faced due to the cost of living crisis, including: the provision of hot meals; equipment such as slow cookers; warm space activities; activities to support physical and mental wellbeing, and opportunities for social engagement, including travel costs.

- LOPF received applications from **34 organisations** in two weeks.
- **18 organisations** received a Healthy, Warm and Well grant.
- Together they supported **2,038 people** in Spring and Summer 2023.

This report is based on the end-of-grant monitoring submitted by delivery partners.

"My GP referred me to HOPE for support, I was feeling very low and struggling to make ends meet. I have had several emergency food parcels and I am now going to the pantry for food every week. This is helping so much. I also was given a slow cooker which is great as I can cook everything in one pot. I am also making new friends and have joined the craft group." (Female, aged 93)



An overview of the work delivered by each of the 18 delivery partners

Happy Global Families

- Created a safe and welcoming environment for older individuals.
- Organised cultural cooking sessions where older members shared recipes and cooking techniques with the younger generation to teach them about different cultures' unique cooking styles.
- Facilitated cultural dances and songs to promote togetherness.
- Hired a facilitator to coordinate and lead these activities.



"It was a heartwarming sight to see older people making friendships with the younger generation as they collaborated in sharing their knowledge of cooking"

Your Back Yard

- Ran six online gentle exercise classes per week, including Tai Chi, Yoga and Pilates.
- Introduced strength and conditioning classes to reduce older participants' vulnerability to falls.
- Hosted Zoom cafés after the classes so people could socialise, and incorporated meditation sessions into the cafés for wellbeing.
- Conducted six in-person fitness classes, specifically for older women.
- Participated in an event at the Heart Centre to host taster fitness sessions and raise awareness about their activities.

Holbeck Together

- Organised two themed events with tribute entertainment acts & hot lunches.
- Celebrated King Charles III coronation with special activities including a freshly prepared buffet, coronation games and quizzes, a free coronation raffle, entertainment and a celebration pack for attendees to take home and use whilst watching the coronation. Lunches were sent to 20 individuals who could not join in with the celebrations at the community centre.
- Provided free monthly Sunday lunches for over 40 people for three months.
- Offered free transport to attend Holbeck Together activities for three months.
- Supported independent shopping outings with free transport.

"[We] are finding that due to the cost of living crisis, clients are being more careful when making decisions on where and how they spend their money, especially on items such as their social life. This project has enabled clients to look forward to seeing friends and joining in with a community event / activity without having to worry about the financial implications."

Halton Moor & Osmondthorpe Project for Elders (HOPE):

- Purchased slow cookers to enable cost-effective cooking.
- Expanded the Community Food Pantry, bought fresh fruits and vegetables, trained more volunteers and invited more older people to join the pantry.
- Held drop-in information sessions on income maximisation and budgeting.
- Updated notice boards with information on local organisations and managing long-term health conditions.
- Visited housebound members to ensure the same level of support and delivered Food Pantry items.
- Hosted soup and sandwich sessions with support and advice.
- Assisted people in applying for benefits.



"HOPE has supported me for over twenty years and this year even more so given the financial crisis. I need some emergency food as I ran out and now attend the pantry every Friday. I always have fresh food in for the weekend and use the slow cooker that was provided. HOPE staff and volunteers are my heroes." (Male, aged 97)

Vandan Group

- Rented a venue for organising yoga sessions for older individuals.
- Focused on creating a safe and social environment so people could socialise and participate in activities that benefit their health, including craft sessions.
- Provided hot drinks, meals, and snacks.
- Held information sessions on maintaining good mental and physical health.
- Offered one-on-one assistance for those needing additional support to take part in these activities.



Richmond Hill Elderly Action (RHEA)

- Used the grant to fund the minibus to transport vulnerable & frail members.
- Specifically reached out to the most vulnerable/most frail members to get them out of their homes and into a warm space such as one of RHEA's three lunch clubs.
- Introduced a small number of new members to RHEA services and activities.

"The funding allowed us some extra flexibility to pay extra staff hours where demand was needed without worrying about budgets and our own reserves"

Older People's Action in the Locality (OPAL)

- Hosted a weekly games session called 'Monday Blues Buster' with various activities and support available.
- Offered free drinks, snacks, board games, books, music, and friendly staff/volunteer interaction during the sessions.



Morley Salvation Army

- Supported their weekly Luncheon Club with subsidised meals
- Kept the cost of meals low for attendees despite rising energy/food costs.
- Offered special meals for free, including fish and chips and afternoon tea.
- Provided shopping vouchers to assist with food costs over the summer, when the Luncheon Club doesn't run.

"The lady who had not had fish and chips for years had tears in her eyes as she said thank you - we take so much for granted."

Bramley Elderly Action (BEA)

- Split the grant between BEA and OWLS Neighbourhood Network Schemes.
- BEA funded the Cozy Café between April and June, offering hot food and beverages with the menu choices informed by participants.
- Arranged entertainment, quizzes, and seasonal celebrations.
- Distributed supermarket vouchers to older people struggling with food costs.
- OWLS funded weekly lunch clubs between April and June, including transport for people who needed it. An average of 27 older people attended weekly.



MHA Communities South Leeds

- Provided slow cookers, air fryers, and microwaves to reduce energy bills.
- Distributed store cupboard ingredients alongside the equipment and offered recipe cards for step-by-step cooking of nutritious meals.
- Organised group sessions for cooking and socialising.
- Identified members struggling with debt / cost of living and provided support and signposting.
- Assisted members in applying for benefits or government fuel payments to maximise their income.

Otley Action for Older People

- Ran a weekly community café offering a warm and inviting space for older people at risk of social isolation and also in need of subsidised food.
- Provided a subsidised daily hot meal delivery service for their most isolated members who can't prepare warm meals themselves and who are feeling the pinch due to the cost of living crisis.

Hamwattan Centre

- Provided 1:1 support and group activities for older people, such as chair-based exercise, massage therapy, and mental wellbeing sessions.
- Conducted outreach work to reach more older people; sharing information, signposting to local services and assisting with income maximisation / benefits.
- Organised a day trip to Whitby for members, and an Eid party.
- Offered transport to and from the centre for people with accessibility needs.
- Used funding for responding to the needs of older people in Leeds, particularly around social contact and physical and mental wellbeing.



Moor Allerton Elderly Care (MAECare)

- Hosted a Friday Breakfast Club between April and June, with hot sandwiches, porridge and freshly baked goods made by a volunteer.
- Offered benefits/utility assistance and social support at the club.
- Provided transport as needed.

Memory Lane Trust CIC

- Operated a weekly community café for those at risk of social isolation, or who have mobility needs or mental health issues.
- Offered hot meals, games, quizzes, sing-alongs, and chair-based exercise.
- Offered return transport for individuals with mobility issues.
- Raised awareness of the challenges faced by older people in the cost-of-living crisis and how the community can help.

Caring Together in Woodhouse and Little London

- Facilitated exercise and dance sessions for members, including chair-based sessions for people with limited mobility, using experienced practitioners.
- Provided accessible transport options so people could join the sessions.
- Organised two trips - a visit to the coast and to a restaurant - both with accessible coach transport. 98 people took part.
- Offered in-depth financial support and assistance to vulnerable members.

HAVA

- Raised awareness of their warm space provision and the services available from their organisation.

AVSED

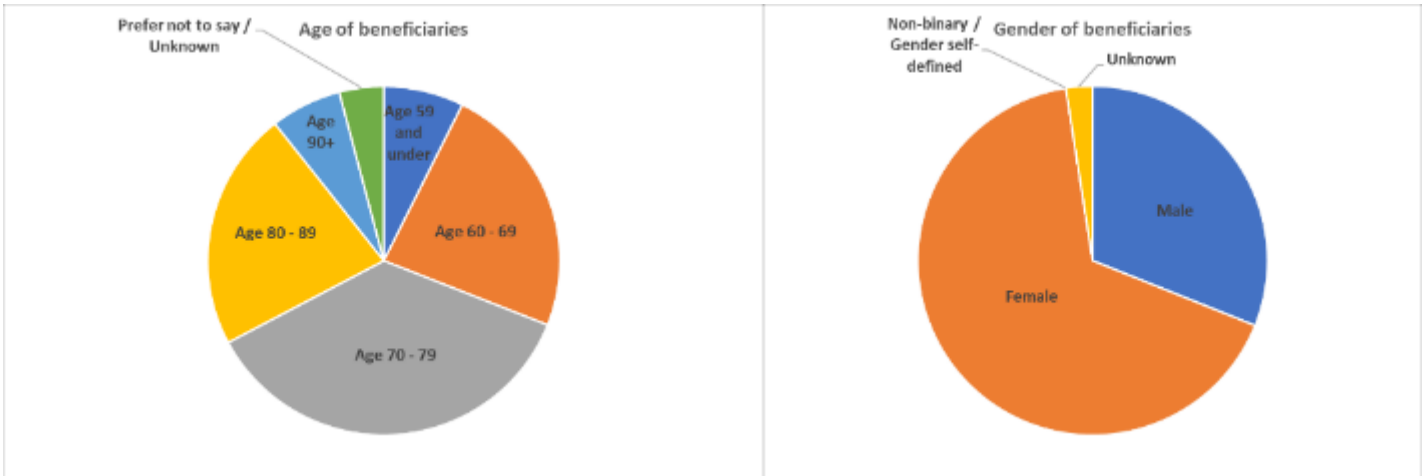
- Used the grant to offer information and advice on staying healthy, warm, and well to over 660 members, 120 volunteers and a mailing list of 200+ people.
- Supplemented their existing warm spaces to provide additional support to those struggling financially, including free hot meals and transport.
- Opened their doors during warm spaces and regular sessions to more older people, thanks to extended hours and staff support for outreach work.



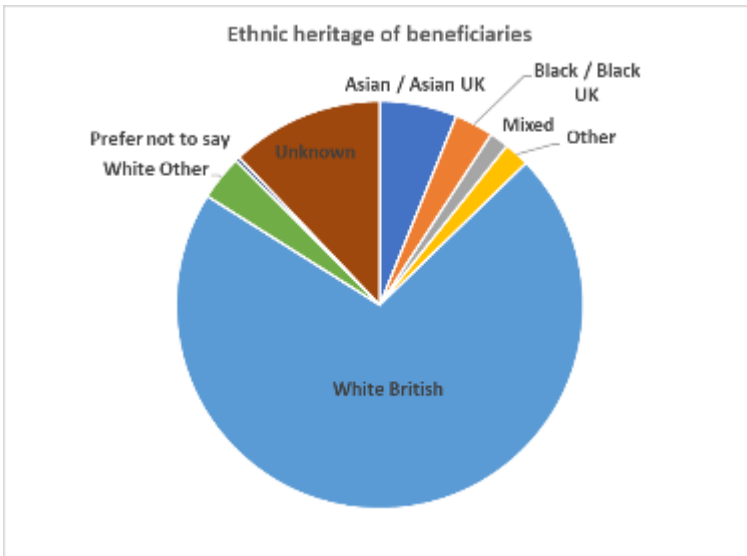
Burmantofts Community Friends CIO (BCF)

- Conducted weekly drop-in outreach advice sessions for 3 months with staff on hand to provide practical advice and support on cost of living, bills, benefits, well-being, and social engagement.
- Carried out home visits for isolated residents, offering support and working with partners to identify services that can support residents remotely.
- Hosted hot lunches to ensure attendees received nutritious food and general well-being checks, attracting 96 attendees over eight weeks.
- Held three special advice sessions on cost of living, safety, and well-being, distributing winter packs - a torch, thermal underwear, hat, gloves, warm drinks and soups (funded by another source) at the sessions - and leaflets containing useful numbers.

Age, gender and ethnic heritage of 2,038 beneficiaries



Quotes from beneficiaries:



"BCF has given me shopping cards when I needed money in between my benefits. I come along to a weekly meal group where they listen and treat me like a normal person. I am very happy I know about BCF." (Male, aged 67)

"My father is significantly happier since joining Caring Together, I live outside Leeds and worry much less about him and how he is coping since we lost mum." (Son of member)

"This place is a lifeline, I love coming here every week and enjoy the groups, everyone is always so helpful." (Female, aged 86)

"It has been a godsend over the winter months"

Benefits to the organisations receiving Healthy, Warm and Well grants

The grants increased each organisation's ability (and capacity) to support older people. Delivery partners explained that the grant enabled them to:

- provide a greater range of services and opportunities which give a greater chance of attracting new members.
- run new classes specifically aimed at older adults.
- offer more in-depth support to more people, including outreach and home visits, to ensure no-one was left unsupported.
- offer free hot food /drinks and provide an occasional treat to boost morale.
- remove financial barriers to participation for older people as activities could be provided at low-cost or no-cost.
- extend or increase the number of social events and lunches on offer.
- advertise classes in more places, such as local community centres, libraries and at local events to raise awareness with a different audience.
- pay for extra staff hours where demand was needed, without worrying about budgets, or employ an additional member of staff.
- provide a consistent offer of transport to older people.
- distribute vouchers to specifically help people struggling financially.
- better understand which groups of older people are particularly struggling e.g. those just before pension age, in private rented and social housing, living alone, widowed men.
- test their approach and develop an evidence base which can be used in future funding bids.

"It's always great when you convince other local people to get involved with Caring Together. It feels like you are making a difference." (Volunteer)

Stories about the impact the grant has had on older beneficiaries

** All names have been changed*

Sidney's* story

Sidney, age 91, said: *"I have become more confident in myself and in May 2023 I joined the Men's Group which I am enjoying. I have made new friends and networks and I am enjoying social activities. So far, I have been on a barge trip which was wonderful and I played snooker for the first time in thirty years.*

I have been able to catch up with arrears on utilities and as a result I feel less stressed and in more control of my finances. I feel I have purpose again, a reason to keep living and making the most of new opportunities because I feel healthier, and I am managing my health conditions better. I think I was also depressed but now I feel less worried about things and positive."

Lily's* story

Lily is 91 years of age and lives alone. Her children are overseas and she spends much of her time alone feeling isolated and lonely. We received the referral for Lily to join HOPE in March 2023 from her neighbour who was becoming concerned about her wellbeing. A staff member visited Lily at home and found her to be frail and eating very little in terms of hot food.

Lily is now receiving home care. Lily is now in receipt of Attendance Allowance. Lily is using the pantry and started to use her slow cooker using ingredients from the pantry. Lily has also joined other HOPE services, these include the weekly Frailty Support group and more recently the Chair Based Yoga sessions.

Lily told us: *"I feel so much happier and have made friends. I feel healthier as I am eating better and keeping warmer because I have more money to manage".*

Cecil's* story

We have slowly seen more of Cecil since he lost his wife of 50+ years. He lives in a cold back to back house and only really goes out to eat as he doesn't cook much. As we were able to host more open opportunities for good food and company in a warm environment, we have seen more of him, which is a privilege.

Dot's* story

Dot has said that she really enjoys playing games with her friends. She likes how it is something different to do instead of just looking at the same four walls all day.

Petra's* story

Petra contacted BEA on a Friday afternoon, quite desperate as she had run out of food and could not afford electricity until she next received benefits. Living alone in social housing with long term health conditions, not yet of pensionable age. We were able to distribute a food voucher to tide her over.

Davide's* story

Davide was signposted by the local postman - who noticed he always sat in the porch in a coat. We visited Davide who informed us the porch is the smallest and warmest room in the house. He hadn't had the heating on due to worries around high bills. We supported him by looking into his fuel situation - making a payment for Davide which relieved anxiety about going too high. We looked at energy saving ideas like using a microwave rather than putting the oven on for a ready meal and we purchased a microwave for him. Davide was sleeping fully clothed so we purchased thermal night clothes and fleece bedding & quilt - he said it was the best night sleep he had had for years. Davide now receives a subsidised hot meal delivery once a week - where a befriender goes in too and they have lunch together.

Case study of the impact the grant to MAECare had on Paul*

Paul* is a 70-year-old man who began to engage with MAECare when his partner died in March 2023. Paul had previously never attended any events held at MAECare until this point. Paul began to come to our breakfast club on Fridays in March 2023. This had been a process of firstly engaging with him to gain confidence and trust in us by helping him sort out practical issues and advocate on his behalf, as well as listening to him grieve for his partner when he was upset and sad.

Paul has some difficulties in communication and at first appeared very under-confident and socially awkward. In the past Paul has had mental health issues. We encouraged Paul to come along and slowly he began to integrate into the group.

Paul has regularly attended breakfast for the last four months. I feel we have been there as a support mechanism for Paul during this very difficult period in his life. Over the months we have seen Paul become a valuable member of the group. Paul was signposted to our caseworker who referred him to Social Services to assess him for further needs. The caseworker was able to attend the first few meetings to give an overall view of Paul's situation.

Paul has really come "out of his shell" and slowly began to talk to others. Paul also began to attend some of our other groups including our weekly drop-in on occasions and is now a regular at our Twilight Zone, a monthly supper club with bingo. I think the breakfast club acted as a gateway into our service and now he has built up his confidence to come to other events and activities. I believe that MAECare has helped Paul to be less isolated. Our understanding and knowledge of him prior to engagement in our services was that he was a socially isolated man, this isolation was exacerbated by him losing his partner.

Although the breakfast club function is primarily to offer breakfast it offers far more. We have at least one member of staff present as well as volunteers. People also often ask for help with things they might be struggling with during the group. It might be just signposting, providing a listening ear, or getting a phone number. The group also listens to each other and provides peer support. I think this service has been a great success and I feel Paul is a good example of its success.

Quotes about the impact the grant has had on older beneficiaries

"Thank you, your support has been overwhelming. It's so nice to know that support is out there and I...will use my slow cooker most days." (Female, age 86)

"Thank you for inviting us to the group. I have made new friends and will be able to call them whenever I need to."

"Thank you to...the people that gave the funding, really kind and feel supported."

"We don't come for breakfast, we can make that at home if we like, we come to see each other. A weekend is a long time to spend on your own."

"I live alone and don't enjoy staying at home, which is why I come to the group. Here, we engage in conversations, have hot meals, play bingo, join in for yoga sessions, crack jokes, sing and stay cosy. If I miss a week, it feels like I've been away for several months."

"A few members made friendships within the group who now go to one another's homes for meals, so they are not eating alone all the time. A few agreed that eating with friends gave them more of an appetite and something to look forward to."

"Never knew where to start when it came to cooking, I'm no Gordon Ramsey but I'm not doing too bad."

"I would never have even contemplated attending a Pilates Class in a million years if one of the volunteers hadn't talked me into it. It's been absolutely brilliant."

"Knowing that there are such wonderful events on the schedule really gives you something to look forward to – especially when you're at home on your own."

"Lunch Club has really helped me since I lost my husband and helped me re-socialise within the community. It's vital to me getting out weekly"

"All our cafe attendees talk frequently about how they have been keeping the heating at home off or have been skipping meals to be able to afford their bills. Our cafe offers them a chance to enjoy a few hours of escape from the worries they face at home, and we have a very loyal and grateful client base as a result."

"Thanks to the dedication of three volunteers, I have been attending this group for a long time. I absolutely love coming here because we all feel like one big family. The activities, games, educational classes, warm space, safe environment, and delicious refreshments make it a wonderful experience. Everyone knows each other and feels comfortable coming to the group, which feels like a true blessing from above."

Conclusion

The grant has helped third sector organisations to make a difference to the lives of older people who are struggling to make ends meet with the cost of living crisis.

It's unacceptable, and upsetting, to know that our older people are facing so much poverty, so much need. In the words of one delivery partner: *"Not having sufficient heat and food to live is crushing mentally, not to mention the physical effects which are heightened in older people whose [health] resilience levels are low. Knowing where to turn when things get tough, knowing what support is available without being judged can be - and has been - life saving for some."*

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