

Report of the Chief Officer Communities

Report to Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities)

Date: 09 July 2020

Subject: Responding to the COVID 19 Pandemic – The Volunteer Response

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary

1. Main issues

- On the 23rd of March 2020, the UK government announced a lockdown of the country and the Coronavirus Act 2020 received Royal Assent on the 25th of March 2020. The provisions of the Act enabled the government on the basis of scientific advice to – for example - restrict or prohibit public gatherings, control or suspend public transport, order businesses to close, temporarily detain people suspected of COVID-19, and close educational and childcare premises etc.. It is in this lockdown context that the COVID-19 volunteering response was initiated, urgently, as the needs of the vulnerable citizens of Leeds grew exponentially in those early days.
- Undoubtedly, the COVID-19 pandemic emergency has been one of the most challenging events in the recent history of Leeds and it has brought into sharp relief the crucial role of local authorities, the Third Sector and volunteering in providing leadership to the city and in working in partnership to help support and meet the needs of the citizens of Leeds. Particularly, those individuals and families who are isolated and vulnerable. The pandemic emergency initiated a crisis that quickly brought to the fore a large number of needs across the communities in Leeds and it has exacerbated health, economic, social and other inequalities in the city.
- The volunteering work highlighted in this report represents an insight into just one element of the plethora work that has been done in the city under the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan and it seeks to respond to an evaluation of the

arrangements to make them even better, more agile, flexible and responsive to need.

- Whilst the majority of this report focuses on a specific aspect of volunteering known as 'Tier 2' volunteering that has been the council's organised response to COVID-19 in partnership with Voluntary Action Leeds. It is important to recognise and celebrate the remarkable work that has been done by the many local third sector organisations in their local neighbourhoods and communities and that are not directly involved in the formal citywide arrangement. Without these every day, hyper-local endeavours the challenge in the city would have been much more challenging than it has already been.

2. Best Council Plan Implications (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

- The work referenced in this report has contributed to the Councils overall aim of tackling poverty and reducing inequalities. In particular it has focused on Safe, Strong Communities including -
 - Keeping people safe from harm and protecting the most vulnerable.
 - Helping people out of financial hardship.
 - Being responsive to local needs, building thriving, resilient communities.
 - Promoting community respect and resilience.

3. Resource Implications

- In addition to the thousands of volunteers that have been recruited and deployed, funding has been provided by Adults and Health Directorate direct to hubs and from the Community Committee wellbeing funds where appropriate to COVID-19 local activities. Where appropriate and supportive of voluntary hubs, existing funding has been re-purposed for COVID-19 work. A review has taken place with voluntary hubs on their experience over the past three months to inform immediate and longer-term resource requirements for a more sustainable programme.
- Council staff have been extensively re-deployed from other non-essential council services to administer the extensive back office arrangements and as link officers with hubs. The Communities Team have been re-focused to COVID-19 support to communities and hubs for the past three months. Voluntary Action Leeds have contributed significant staff time and other resources in supporting the overall arrangements and the voluntary hubs directly including, organising the review meetings and producing publications that enhance the volunteering effort overall.

Recommendations

- a) Note and comment on the contents of this report.
- b) Contribute to the refining of the current volunteer hub arrangements for a more bottom up approach.
- c) Contribute to the shaping of a coordinated volunteering arrangement in the city for the longer term.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the work which Leeds City Council (LCC), Voluntary Action Leeds (VAL) and other organisations undertook to respond to needs in our communities as the Covid-19 Pandemic set in. The report focusses on the primary response to meeting the immediate needs of these communities.

2. Background information

- 2.1 On the 23rd of March 2020 the UK government took the decision to lockdown the country as the key response to the COVID 19 pandemic. The aim was to prevent infection transmission in the general population by restricting the types of activities which could be undertaken beyond the home. The key advice was to stay at home, leaving only for essential supplies (food and medicine), and exercise and for essential work. This advice necessitated the closure of businesses and wider activities and the loss of income to communities.

The government further announced that to ensure compliance with the instruction to stay at home, an additional set of measures were to be implemented, including the following:

- Closure of all shops selling non-essential goods, including clothing and electronic stores and other premises including libraries, playgrounds and outdoor gyms, and places of worship;
- Stop all gatherings of more than two people in public, excluding, people you live with;
- Stop all social events, including weddings, baptisms and other ceremonies, but excluding funerals; and
- Parks remaining open for exercise but gatherings to be dispersed

- 2.2 The NHS wrote to people considered to be at highest clinical risk from COVID-19 to inform them that they should stay at home at all times and avoid all face-to-face contact except with carers and healthcare workers as part of their medical care. This is known as 'shielding'. Those contacted in this way were strongly advised to rigorously follow the guidance.

- 2.3 The pandemic emergency initiated a crisis that quickly brought to the fore a large number of needs across the communities in Leeds. For example, where individuals were required to stay at home but without access to funds, their ability to shop for basic necessities or to collect medicines for their treatments was heavily impaired. This was exacerbated if they had no trusted neighbours, friends or relatives to help them. The negative impact in the more disadvantaged areas of the city where the ability to withstand shocks was restricted was significant as it was in all areas for those with underlying health conditions or where age related risks necessitated self-isolation.

- 2.4 There have been a range of volunteer responses to the pandemic narrowly described for the purposes of managing the response as Tier 1, 2 and 3 volunteering. This report focuses on the 'Tier 2' Community Care Volunteer response. Nevertheless, work has taken place at both 'Tier 1' and 'Tier 3' and this is highlighted below.

- 2.5 LCC Adults and Health directorate have worked closely with VAL to identify volunteers in Tier 1 who were willing to undertake tasks which would require them to provide more intensive support to people needing it. This included driving people to medical appointments and providing support inside their homes. When enhanced DBS requirements were confirmed, these Tier 1 volunteers were deployed through a central co-ordination team in order to provide support to people across the city. Advice from Public Health about the most appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for these volunteers was sought, guidance was issued and continued support offered to these volunteers.
- 2.6 The Tier 1 volunteers are co-ordinated by the Older Peoples Commissioning Team in the LCC Adults & Health directorate. The Business Support Centre has confirmed the DBS status of 485 Tier 1 volunteers and the team in Adults & Health also provides support and advice to the community hubs around more complex referrals including, when there may be a need for a social care referral. Tier 1 volunteers have also been provided to other organisations and services in Leeds, such as the Age UK Hospital to Home scheme, Forward Leeds and the Leeds & York Partnership Foundation Trust. Appendix 1 provides a snapshot of Tier 1 numbers, activities and the organisations supported.
- 2.7 One of the most striking aspects of Leeds' response was the willingness of people in neighbourhoods and communities to support one another without any organisational involvement at all - known internally as the 'Tier 3' approach. To support and promote this vital work, VAL developed the 'Being a Good Neighbour Pack' and made it widely accessible in late March. The guide provided practical and common sense advice for people who wanted to offer support in their neighbourhood and those who may need support, to do so safely. This has been regularly promoted throughout the pandemic, with a dedicated page on Doing Good Leeds website. A series of blogs called Socially Connected Leeds, have also sought to continuously highlight ongoing activity within local communities and neighbourhoods all the way through the crisis.

3. Main issues

Recruiting Volunteers

- 3.1 In order to ensure a joined up and safe response across the city which ensured that everyone, including the most vulnerable people were able to access help and support, VAL in partnership with Leeds City Council launched a new volunteering programme - Community Care Volunteers. Potential volunteers were asked to register via the Doing Good Leeds website and were then required to complete an online induction programme, covering health and safety; equality and diversity; data protection and safeguarding. The response was excellent and at its peak, the programme attracted sign ups from nearly 8,000 people across Leeds. Of these 8000 people, 5,400 went on to fully complete all parts of their induction, meaning they were ready to be deployed.
- 3.2 Local deployment was not without its challenges, and there were many wards where the number of available volunteers far exceeded the number of referrals/people requiring support. It is estimated that around 1,600 volunteers were deployed locally through Hubs, 100 through the Tier 1 Service, 300 as part of the "RU OK?" befriending programme and 25 as part of the Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service volunteer support line, equating to just under 40% of the overall number.

- 3.3 Many volunteers were keen to be deployed and help as soon as possible. In order to address this and keep people informed, VAL sent out regular bulletins to all inducted volunteers to keep them informed and encourage them to undertake acts of local neighbourliness whilst they were waiting to be formally called upon. Over time this initial approach was expanded to include advertising specific new volunteering opportunities related to COVID-19 but outside of the Community Care volunteer programme, including links to the volunteering pages of the Doing Good Leeds website. This approach led to 200,000 visits to the website in May 2020 alone. VAL also undertook to support Hubs where they were in need of additional volunteers and source these from areas that had a surplus of volunteers, enabling people to volunteer in a different part of the city and easing pressure on Hubs with high levels of referrals.
- 3.4 Whilst not everyone who signed up was able to be deployed, the response in Leeds and opportunities given to volunteers compares favourably to that of other volunteering schemes.
- 3.5 Arrangements were put in place to secure DBS checks where required. All active volunteers were issued with identification badges from LCC and communications across the city encouraged people to ask to see the badges in case of any concerns. An important safeguard in the light of a number of reports of fraud related to COVID-19.

Securing Volunteer Hubs

- 3.6 To ensure that volunteers were able to be deployed to support people locally, VAL worked in partnership with LCC Communities Team to set up a new network of volunteer 'hubs' across the city. On 24th March an online discussion was facilitated by Leeds City Council and Voluntary Action Leeds engaged with a range of third sector organisations who were interested of being a ward level hub and leading the response to meeting needs at the local level. By the 25th of March, organisations had confirmed their intent to participate in the programmes and the volunteer response commenced. The participant organisations are listed at Appendix 2.
- 3.7 Working closely with these third sector organisations, the new network was rapidly set up, involving twenty-seven locally based and trusted organisations acting as the lead organisation within each of the thirty-three electoral wards in Leeds. Following the launch of a central LCC COVID-19 telephone helpline in late March accompanied by a citywide distribution of leaflets to 330,000 households shortly thereafter to promote it, the Hubs took on the responsibility of responding to referrals for support from people living locally to them. Hubs were provided with daily lists of available volunteers in their area for them to match with local people requiring that support.
- 3.8 Leeds City Council provided direct financial support in the form of an initial grant of £5k per ward. Each ward allocated £10k of their Community Committee wellbeing funds for ward members to fund local activities, including, where appropriate the work of the local volunteer hubs. In addition, the Council has provided substantial management and logistical support including the re-deployment of staff from services where activity had ceased temporarily.
- 3.9 VAL's strong experience of volunteer management meant they were able to provide ongoing support and advice to Hubs. Organisations were issued with a Volunteer

Management Guide and a Volunteer Activity Guide providing accessible and practical advice, regularly updated. All Hubs were matched with a VAL link worker who was on hand to provide support, answer questions and problem solve. A number of Hubs made use of support that was available from experienced volunteer managers from other organisations, brokered through the Leeds Volunteer Managers Network.

Design features of the response

3.10 Important features of the volunteer response were –

- A Leeds City Council (LCC) directed element as follows:
 - Telephone helpline to receive requests from the public.
 - Welfare support offer including the opening of a warehouse to co-ordinate the food response.
 - Direct delivery service of emergency food parcels.
 - Referral system for local hubs for on-going food parcel delivery.
 - Secure system through which volunteers could purchase food for residents who were unable to leave home to do their shopping and do have the monetary means to pay for food.
- Matching required tasks to volunteers by the voluntary hubs, the shopping was completed as per the request by the resident, and receipts were returned to LCC so that residents could be billed.
- Collection of prescriptions from pharmacies by volunteers so that residents can access essential medical supplies.
- The development of a central welfare calls service called “RU OK?” with oversight by Leeds Older People’s Forum. This service, which involves matching a person in need with a volunteer caller, aimed to complement existing arrangements in the city by providing a centralised service for people who may not need any other form of additional support.
- The development of a volunteer-led support service to lend a ‘listening ear’ to other volunteers who may have experienced distressing situations in the course of their role. This service has been developed and managed by Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service.

3.11 Hubs responded by matching volunteers to tasks where help was needed, as well as creating food and other provision locally. The local response began from 26th March 2020. Capacity to deliver was either built from a limited base as a direct response to the pandemic emergency or expanded from existing third sector activity. The organisations involved in the response ranged from Neighbourhood Networks, community groups, youth organisations through to environmental and cultural organisations.

Performance

3.12 Over the past 13 weeks the Council has received over 19,000 service calls. These were responded to in by emergency action - usually a food parcel delivery by the Council - using the resources at the food warehouse developed specifically for that purpose. The individuals and families that have been helped have continued to receive further and often regular support directly from the voluntary hubs after the initial call. The detail of the council’s referral data is shown in appendix 3.

- 3.13 It is also clear that strong, effective partnerships have been developed with other local organisations who can often extend the assistance. For example, to provide support physical, emotional and mental wellbeing needs and also ensuring that links are established with equality communities in the city.

Impact

- 3.14 In addition to the council's referral data, VAL has been collecting weekly information from Hubs about the range of activities they are undertaking and the impact of the work on people and communities. This data helps to articulate a wider story about the impact of the Hubs which is not captured solely by referral data as many people have been accessing support directly from Hubs as local trusted organisations.
- 3.15 In addition to the council's referral data, VAL has been collecting weekly information from Hubs about the range of activities they are undertaking and the impact of the work on people and communities. This data helps to articulate a wider story about the impact of the Hubs which is not captured solely by referral data as many people have been accessing support directly from Hubs as local trusted organisations.
- 3.16 As a snapshot, in the week of 16th to 24th May, it is estimated that across the whole of the Community Care Volunteers programme the following level of programme delivery took place -
- Total number of volunteers deployed: 1500+
 - Number of people receiving on-going support: 5000+
 - Food parcels delivered: 1000+
 - Delivery of hot meals: 700+
 - Buying & delivering paid for shopping: 400 +
 - Prescription collection: 450 +
 - Dog walking: 130+
 - Welfare calls / befriending: 1800+

Case studies

- 3.17 In work of this nature, a dry description of the different elements and outputs of a system do not alone demonstrate the positive impact on citizens in Leeds. Case studies at Appendix 4 prepared by Voluntary Action Leeds and the hub managers tell the story through examples about how the effort has impacted in particular places. In addition, it is anticipated that representatives of some of the organisations involved in the effort will be in attendance at the Scrutiny Board meeting in July to share their experiences with elected members.

Lessons Learned for the initial volunteering response

- 3.18 In late May and early June a series of discussions with groups of Hubs chaired by the Chief Officer Communities were held by Leeds City Council and VAL to review progress, consider the learning and think about both the immediate next steps and longer-term potential of building on the city's response to the crisis.

3.19 Hubs shared their views of both the successes and challenges of the programme as follows:

Successes

- Overall response of the programme and the speed of set up
- Confidence shown in the third sector and their flexibility and ability to deliver
- Volunteer numbers, skills, responsiveness and commitment to local community
- New volunteers stepping forward alongside those with volunteering experience
- Support from LCC and VAL staff
- Partnerships with other organisations forged, expanded or strengthened to meet needs – i.e. the response has involved a network of local partnerships working with the 27 lead organisations
- Flexibility of funders – freedom to adapt to meet needs
- Contact made with new people / hidden needs in communities recognised
- Locally designed and driven approaches
- Food distribution – avoiding waste and meeting need
- Taking positive action in a negative scenario

Challenges:

- Large numbers of volunteers / effective deployment
- Responding to mental health / emotional needs
- Financial pressure on organisations
- Staff stress and long hours / working weeks
- Supporting volunteers to deal with difficult situations / community needs
- Longer-term challenge of responding to hidden needs uncovered during COVID
- Balancing the core role with the new wider remit (especially cited by Neighbourhood Networks)
- Covering new geographical areas and client groups
- Shifting from community development to service delivery for some
- Over-centralisation of a grass-roots model (feeling of a shift from partnership to a firmer relationship)
- Systems and processes developed in a 'top down' way – with some initial communication issues
- Volume of information and guidance and the accessibility of the information
- Quality of referral data
- Issues with the portal – timing of introduction, training and accessibility
- Initially, an open system to one with later restrictions – i.e. food eligibility

3.20 Hubs described their immediate needs in terms of their ability to continue to provide a response in the short term:

- Funding for Hub role
- Support to secure funding from wider sources
- Respite for staff
- Clarity / reassurance re:
 - Timescales
 - Existing LCC contracts
- Sharing the learning amongst Hubs
- Celebrating the positive impact of the programme
- Exploring new immediate partnership opportunities (food supply / distribution)
- Clarity around support for people and communities (no 'cliff edge')

- Information / guidance around citywide specialist services for signposting / referrals (including adult social care)
- Understanding pressure to return to core business – advice around reopening ‘COVID-compliant’ services
- Reassurance around volunteer numbers / availability

3.21 Hubs also set out some of their suggested principles for building on the response shown to COVID-19 in order to develop a refined model which continues to provide support to people and communities locally and has local ownership. These principles are -

- Sustainably funded
- Co-produced
- Overall blueprint but not top down / one size fits all
- Partnerships not contracts
- Builds on new and existing partnerships
- Retains and develops local volunteers
- Asset-based and restorative in nature
- Ongoing support for previously ‘hidden’ needs
- Provides locally designed support at a community level
- Recognises the skills of organisations working with particular client groups
- Builds on trust shown in the third sector – and places further trust in them
- Engages a wide range of local partners – including faith groups / organisations
- Considers both the material *and* emotional needs of people and communities

3.22 As a result of these discussions and feedback there is now a programme of improvement work to respond to these issues, led by LCC for the immediate issues and VAL for the longer term development of a new model within localities

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

4.1.1 Engagement continues between services within the council, with partners, with elected members and with the public. It has not always been possible to engage in the normal way about service changes as there has been no choice about many of the changes to ensure compliance with national guidance. Engagement with stakeholders has continued and in many cases been strengthened with the context of what we have had to manage during this incident

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

4.2.1 Work has been taking place in Leeds to understand the disproportionate or differential impact on inequality that is happening due to COVID-19. This work is supported by Voluntary Action Leeds, Forum Central and a range of partners who provide specialist support to the city’s diverse communities. This includes starting to gather evidence of the impact on Communities of Interest, some of which is evidence based and some is based on direct community conversations in the form of a narrative. It also shows that there is considerable experiential overlap across many Communities of Interest. This work mirrors work that being undertaken by Public Health on wider health inequalities of COVID-19.

4.2.2 This emerging evidence highlights that the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated already inherent social and economic inequalities and we need to further understand what these impacts are on communities in Leeds. What it tells us so far mirrors national evidence and the local narrative that COVID-19 does have a disproportionate and differential impact based on where you live, your gender, your ethnicity and your job etc. For example, being unable to self-isolate due to insecure jobs and/or living in close proximity to each other in densely populated areas

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

4.3.1 The work referenced in this report has contributed to the Councils overall aim of tackling poverty and reducing inequalities. In particular it has focused on Safe, Strong Communities including -

- Keeping people safe from harm and protecting the most vulnerable.
- Helping people out of financial hardship.
- Being responsive to local needs, building thriving, resilient communities.
- Promoting community respect and resilience.

Climate Emergency

4.3.2 The pandemic emergency has seen limited movement in the city over the past three months and a reduction in daily emissions. In that context, the volunteering programme has recruited volunteers local to the wards they are supporting and deployed effectively to minimise unnecessary vehicle journeys, wherever possible. Clearly, some vehicle journeys are inevitable when picking up shopping or medicines and delivering them to the resident and where possible, shopping trips have been to local shops. Although, this has not been the primary concern and delivering much needed food and medicines has been the priority.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

4.4.1 Funds to provide this volunteer response have been sourced from grant funding identified by Adult Social Care and Health directorate and from local community committee wellbeing funds.

4.4.2 The volunteer response has relied on the commitment and goodwill of volunteers and partners, and to some repurposing of funded activity which was no longer appropriate in the pandemic.

4.5 Legal implications, Access to Information, and Call-in

4.5.1 This report does not contain any exempt or confidential information.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 This project has been delivered within the context of the COVID-19 Leeds Strategic Response and Recovery Plan and risk management has been considered in that vein with the work being reported to the Citizens and Communities Silver Multi Agency Group chaired by the Director of Communities and Environment.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The volunteering response to the pandemic in Leeds has been a resounding celebration of the community spirit in this city and a testimony to many years of effective partnership working, relationship building and community leadership. It is now incumbent on the city to harness the energy that has been liberated from communities across the city and in the way that people have come together to respond to the crisis for the benefit of the city in the medium to longer term.
- 5.2 The response has created an opportunity for the good of the whole of Leeds and it is planned to build upon this in the coming months to encourage people who may not have volunteered previously to continue to undertake a voluntary role following this crisis. Voluntary Action Leeds will enhance this opportunity by introducing a new volunteering platform for the city called “Be Collective”.
- 5.3 The crisis has further demonstrated the crucial role of third sector organisations working with people and communities in their locality to provide support and reassurance. The levels of partnership working and collaboration between Leeds City Council and third sector organisations have been unprecedented. As a partnership we want to continue to learn from this to explore opportunities to further develop services and support in neighbourhoods, building on the record of the city for delivering innovative services and approaches including, Asset Based Community Development, restorative practice and the Neighbourhood Networks.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 Note and comment on the content of this report.
- 6.2 Contribute to the refining of the current volunteer hub arrangements for a more bottom up approach.
- 6.3 Contribute to the shaping of a coordinated volunteering arrangement in the city for the longer term.

7. Background documents¹

- 7.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

Appendix1

Snapshot of Tier 1 numbers and activities (w/c 15th June 2020)

Volunteer Details

Total DBS checked volunteers	485
Total Volunteers Matched	117
Volunteers matched with another Organisation	89
Volunteers matched for LCC	28
Inactive volunteers	41
Pending volunteers	0
Previously Volunteered with LCC referral	3

Community Referrals - LCC

Total	61
Matched Referrals	11
Referrals sorted through other means	49
Referrals pending	1
People receiving:	
Phone befriending	10
Face to face befriending	2
Food shopping and delivery	5
Prescription collection	2
Pension/Bills	2

Residential Referrals - LCC

Total	28
Matched Referrals	2
Referrals sorted through other means	2
Homes Receiving:	
Food shopping and delivery	1
Prescription collection	1

Other Organisations

Total referrals from other organisations	8
Matched referrals	7
Pending Referrals	1
Total active Volunteers with external organisations	89
Organisations receiving:	
Phone Befriending	1
Face to face befriending	1
Food shopping and delivery	1
Prescription collection	2
Transport	2
Social media support	2
Admin support	1

Organisation	Referral	Volunteers Requested	Volunteers sent	Active Volunteers	Pending	No longer wanting/ able to volunteer
Age UK Leeds	Hospital to home service	12	15	14		1
Forward Leeds	Helping deliver controlled drugs	5	13	6		7
LYPFT	Supporting on mental health wards in a healthcare support role	20	19	12		7
Leeds Cancer Awareness Project	Helping spread information, advice and awareness via Facebook for the project	10 -20	10 + 11	7	1 + 11	2
Holbeck Together	Providing volunteers to help prepare and deliver food parcels as well as help out with befriending calls	5	5	5		
Sue Ryder	Helping people with transport to hospital appointments	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
LYPFT	Volunteer shoppers	6+	19		19	
LYPFT	PPE stock management	3+	15	2	13	
LCC Care Delivery Service	Various roles supporting in house services		13		13	

Appendix 2

Community Care Volunteers – Ward hubs

Ward	Third sector volunteer coordination lead	Contact Name	Email
Adel & Wharfedale	OPAL	Joanna Mawson	johanna@opal-project.org.uk
Alwoodley	Moor Allerton Elderly Care	Julia Edmunds	julia@maecare.org.uk
Ardley & Robin Hood	Groundwork	Adrian Curtis	ACurtis@groundwork.org.uk
Armley	New Wortley Community Centre	Andrea Edwards	Andrea.Edwards@newwortleycc.org
Beeston & Holbeck	Slung Low	Alan Lane	alan@slunglow.org
Bramley & Stanningley	Barca	Joe Kent	volunteerhub@barca-leeds.org
Burmantofts & Richmond Hill	Leeds Mencap	Bernie Gahan	bernie.gahan@leedsmencap.org.uk
Calverley & Farsley	Pudsey Parish Church	Vicar Richard Dimery	vicar@pudseyparish.org.uk
Chapel Allerton	Feel Good Factor	Corrina Lawrence	Corrina@fgfleeds.org
Cross Gates & Whinmoor	Cross Gates & District Good Neighbours Scheme	Jo Horsfall	jo@crossgatesgns.org.uk
Farnley & Wortley	Armley Helping Hands	Dawn Newsome	dawn.newsome@armleyhelpinghands.org
Garforth & Swillington	Garforth Net	Monica Walker	monica@netgarforth.org
Gipton & Harehills	CATCH	Del Sylvester	del@arkleeds.co.uk
Guiseley & Rawdon	AVSED	Michelle Phillips	avsed@btconnect.com
Harewood	Wetherby in Support of the Elderly	Mark Dobson	mark@w-ise.org.uk
Headingley & Hyde Park	Hyde Park Source	Behla Hutchinson	behla@hydeparksource.org
Horsforth	Horsforth Community aid project	Sally Metcalfe	Sally.Metcalfe@mha.org.uk
Hunslet & Riverside	Involve (Hunslet)	Claire Whitley	claire@involveleeds.org.uk
Killingbeck & Seacroft	LS14 Trust	Howard Bradley	howards14trust@gmail.com

Kippax & Methley	Garforth Net	Monica Walker	monica@netgarforth.org
Kirkstall	Kirkstall Valley Development Trust	Adele Rae	adele.rae@kvdt.org.uk
Little London and Woodhouse	Oblong	Jess Fishenden	admin@oblongleeds.org.uk
Middleton Park	Hamara	Shanaz Gul	shanaz@hamara.co.uk
Moortown	InterACT Church and Community Partnership	Vanessa	Vanessa Brown <vanessa@interact.uk.net>
Morley North	Groundwork	Adrian Curtis	ACurtis@groundwork.org.uk
Morley South	Groundwork	Adrian Curtis	ACurtis@groundwork.org.uk
Otley & Yeadon	Otley Action for Older People	Sue Trainor	info@otleyactionforolderpeople.org.uk
Pudsey	Pudsey Parish Church	Vicar Richard Dimery	vicar@pudseyparish.org.uk
Rothwell	Rothwell Live At Home	Mandy Farr	Mandy.Farr@mha.org.uk
Roundhay	St Edmunds church	Reverend Nigel Wright	revnigelwright@gmail.com
Temple Newsam	Hope and Partners	Jeff Coupar	jeff@betterbuildsolutions.co.uk
Weetwood	OPAL	Joanna Mawson	johanna@opal-project.org.uk
Wetherby	Wetherby in Support of the Elderly	Mark Dobson	mark@w-ise.org.uk

Appendix 3

COVID-19: Requests for Support

Ward	Enquiries	Rank	Unique Customers	Rank	Unique Customers per 100 Households	Rank
Adel & Wharfedale	227	30	165	29	1.7	30
Alwoodley	535	13	339	15	3.3	13
Ardsley & Robin Hood	253	28	163	30	1.7	28
Armley	990	5	603	5	5.4	6
Beeston & Holbeck	1054	4	664	4	5.9	3
Bramley & Stanningley	698	10	430	10	3.9	10
Burmantofts & Richmond Hill	1752	1	1185	1	9.9	1
Calverley & Farsley	261	27	179	28	1.7	29
Chapel Allerton	735	9	463	8	4.4	8
Cross Gates & Whinmoor	535	13	349	14	3.2	15
Farnley & Wortley	586	12	390	12	3.2	16
Garforth & Swillington	215	31	157	31	1.8	27
Gipton & Harehills	1531	2	932	2	7.4	2
Guiseley & Rawdon	185	32	137	32	1.3	33
Harewood	181	33	135	33	1.6	32
Headingley & Hyde Park	279	25	198	25	2.0	25
Horsforth	285	24	194	26	1.9	26
Hunslet & Riverside	1335	3	802	3	5.4	5
Killingbeck & Seacroft	926	6	593	6	5.6	4
Kippax & Methley	298	23	228	22	2.4	19
Kirkstall	666	11	407	11	4.4	7
Little London & Woodhouse	750	8	454	9	3.0	17
Middleton Park	852	7	577	7	4.3	9
Moortown	313	21	231	21	2.4	20
Morley North	323	20	237	20	2.2	24
Morley South	497	15	350	13	3.4	11
Otley & Yeadon	251	29	181	27	1.7	31
Pudsey	398	19	264	19	2.3	22
Rothwell	279	25	202	24	2.2	23
Roundhay	431	17	278	18	2.8	18
Temple Newsam	457	16	311	16	3.3	12
Weetwood	306	22	212	23	2.3	21
Wetherby	411	18	301	17	3.2	14
Leeds	19071		12504		3.5	

Enquiries by Shielding Status	Leeds	
	Count	% Total
Yes	7126	47%
No	8177	53%
Total	15303	
Unknown	3768	20%

Requests by Type of Assistance Required	Leeds	
	Count	% Total
Food Parcel	8192	43%
Food and Essential Shopping	4452	23%
Fuel	3388	18%
Prescription	1919	10%
Befriending and Reassurance	514	3%
Baby Products	442	2%
Sanitary and Hygiene Products	82	0%
Dog Walking	77	0%
Total Known Requests	19066	

Appendix 4

Ward Case Studies

Case study 1: Bramley and Stanningley Ward

Bramley and Stanningley Ward is in West Leeds. They have a number of organisations working together to support the local community through the Covid19 crisis.

The hub coordinating organisation is [BARCA](#). They have maintained its current services, adapting to the new operating environment, and has also taken on a new role within the COVID19 pandemic become a volunteer hub. The main thrust of the BARCA Covid19 response work has been delivering food parcels, collecting and delivering prescriptions and making welfare calls. They have used a small number of volunteers for some of this work: 'it helps to have a familiar face at the pharmacy every week', For other aspects, for example welfare calls: their staff team provides expertise to manage these 'we've had calls where people are talking about suicide, or require other safeguarding support and we wouldn't expect volunteers to have to manage this.'

Other organisations have partnered up with BARCA to extend the hub's work. Bramley Care Bears, a small organisation, run by local volunteers, evolved from a desire to make a difference to their local area. Normally the group runs a free garden makeover service, a homework club and organises regular litter picking, for Covid19 work they were asked to focus their attention on essential work which is their food distribution service.

Sixteen volunteers on a rota are currently supporting around 30 – 35 families per week, in 3 different community centres on 3 different days of the week including Sunday. The food is sourced from local Asda, Tesco, M&S (they are on the list for Waitrose), other foodbank outlets from schools, Rosebank Primary and Whitecote Primary, as well as the local hub, BARCA.

They also offer a delivery service to those people who are self isolating, this service has been made much easier by the loan of the Bramley Elderly Action minibus.

[Bramley Elderly Action \(BEA\)](#) has suspended their regular activities and instead offer services designed to support people aged 60+ during the crisis. They are offering a Weekly Shopping Delivery Service, a weekday phone line and email contact, a phone service run by staff and volunteers offering a phone check in and they have developed a phone buddy service called 'phone a new Friend' where BEA members are matched so they phone each other for mutual support.

The longer the need for everyone to stay at home, the more projects respond to these constraints and find creative ways to focus on what is around the home to turn into something new: [Zerowaste Leeds](#) are running online workshops to demonstrate how to create things from items destined for recycling; [Scrap Leeds](#) a project based in West Leeds have distributed 100's of mini make Leeds to families. Local young people have now made a platform on YouTube, called [YouTube Makers Club](#) to show case the activities inspired by the creative packs that have been distributed by [Playful Leeds](#) including growing sunflower seeds.

Bramley Breezers a local running club have picked up this flowering mantle and helped [Solidarity Sunflowers](#) – a Leeds organisation that encourages people to grow sunflowers –

by combining a regular run to drop off bags of sunflowers seedlings to Swinnow Community Centre.

Young people and old have been encouraged to stay active with Garden Groovers work: a partnership project between BARCA and DAZL, a Leeds based dance project, who have now taken this across the city now called doorstep dancing.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/apr/29/youth-worker-coronavirus-youth-services-young-people-pandemic>

Encouraging activity and well-being for local people, has been some of the work [Bramley Baths](#), is doing. Usually a community swimming baths and gym, they have developed Health and Wellbeing packs, that include basic exercise equipment, info sheets and tips, a small bag and water bottle, as well as sunflower seeds and compost. This has been funded by local councillors and the 50 packs are distributed by BARCA.

Case study 2: Burmantofts and Richmond Hill Ward

[Leeds Mencap](#) is the lead hub for the covid19 response for the Richmond Hill and Burmantofts Ward.

Leeds Mencap is based in Richmond Hill and their building is host to a community nursery, a special needs play room and family support services. They have a room hire service as an income generator that supports the Leeds Mencap work as the rooms are only used regularly by their groups on an evening and in the school holidays.

As they had capacity through the immediate re-deployment of room hire staff and space, had developed strong partnerships with local organisations and already used volunteers they were well placed to be a hub lead.

Leeds Mencap have taken a strong partnership approach to managing the hub work and this has supported the ongoing work that organisations, faith groups and community groups continue to do in the area. This hub is one of the busiest in Leeds and the approach tries to ensure that all communities are supported where needed.

The more formal partnership includes Bridge Community Church, Burmantofts Senior Action, Learning Partnerships, Project Hope with Newbourne Church, Richmond Hill Elderly Action, St Hilda's Church with Community Unity, St Vincent's Support Centre, Touchstone and Zarach. These partners take referrals for on-going support. Other locally based organisations and groups (such as Refugee Council and Freedom Church) were happy to continue supporting their clients and communities within the Ward without and know to contact the hub should they require any support.

Leeds Mencap received all the LCC referrals and volunteer applications. 24 Community Team Volunteers have worked directly with Leeds Mencap, including 2 Food and Shopping Co-ordinators, who have been involved in setting up and running a safe and secure paid for shopping service (this was one of the early immediate needs coming through the referrals from the council's helpline – as many shielding/isolating residents were unable to go out, had no one to help them and were unable to access delivery slots from supermarkets for 6 weeks or more). The ward was one of the first to establish a paid for shopping system and this has meant that people had more control over their shopping choices and it is anticipated that this system will still continue as people like their shopping from particular places which a centralised system won't be able to accommodate. In order to safely and logistically manage the delivery of food parcels and shopping, the hub is lucky to have the services of drivers and vans from the Community Payback service and Canopy Housing.

Leeds Mencap as the hub deals with most of the one off interventions (e.g. a prescription pick up, a one off food parcel) and the shopping service. Due to the demographic of the area where there are large numbers of vulnerable people who require ongoing support – these are referred to the most appropriate partner(s).

The partnership model that sprang into action in the ward was not the model that was envisaged when the 'Community Care Programme' was conceived by Leeds City Council and Voluntary Action Leeds but '*we tried to use the right people in the right place, doing the right thing at the right time*' to meet the anticipated high volume and complex needs for support and to ensure that the Community Team Volunteers were able to make a difference alongside existing services and agencies.

As well as contributing to the Hub referral system, partners have continued to support their communities and service users, quickly adapting to find new and safe ways to do this. [Touchstone](#) has supported food donations deliveries and distribution, [Richmond Hill Elderly Action](#) have been continuing to support their clients with support calls and even organised on street bingo.

[Burmantofts Senior Action](#) have provided a telephone support service to their users and continue to offer advice and support from benefits and welfare to technology tips to maintain social contact during this time, and sending out information of activities and help in Leeds.

[Learning partnerships](#) continued to support learners with tutors/key workers calling and emailing them as well as planning courses and developing online classes, for ESOL, Employability, IT and confidence building.

[Zarach](#), an organisation that supports children living in poverty, by delivering beds to families have put this project to one side and set up [Project Vantry](#) by converting their vans to basic pantries so they can supply basic food and hygiene products to families in need, both their existing families as well as accepting referrals from schools. They have also set up an elderly support strand taking referrals from the LCC helpline. All the 'Zarach Seniors' receive two calls and food shopping/medicine collections twice a week. This has been very successful with people very happy with the service: *'Thanks [Tracy July](#) and all our other volunteers for the incredible work you are doing with our seniors. They are so, so grateful'*.

A real positive that has come out of the COVID-19 crisis has been how organisations have rallied to put the community first and build on our shared knowledge and expertise. For example for families who have been struggling we may get in touch with the Inner East Cluster, their school, or the Children's Centre and they would work with us to quickly provide information, advice and/or support as appropriate. Leeds Mencap are liaising with some of the Refugee and Asylum Seeker support groups who are unable to be on the ground delivering their services and they are guiding us to best support their service users.

The partnership aspires to use some of the learning and experience from this to develop future ways of working to better meet the longer term needs of the more vulnerable residents in the ward, including how access to food should be part of a more holistic service.

Case study 3: Gipton and Harehills Ward

Gipton and Harehills Ward have come together to work in creative ways to support the local community through the Coronavirus crisis.

[CATCH – ‘Community Action to Create Hope’](#) is a volunteer-led charity based in the Harehills area of Leeds which was established in 2010. It prides itself on being run ‘for the community by the community’.

Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, CATCH offered opportunities to both young people and adults from diverse backgrounds, promoting volunteering and leadership opportunities alongside schemes such as alternative educational provision, a gym, community cafe and a youth club with hundreds of members. They have continued to serve this community during the additional support they are offering as part of the citywide response.

CATCH operates the community care hub serving the Gipton and Harehills ward in inner-city east Leeds. The ward contains some of the most socio-economically deprived areas of the city, with overcrowded, poor quality housing, poor health outcomes, and a high number of workers in lower-paid service industry jobs. Harehills also has a high representation of BAME communities; groups at greater risk of serious illness from the virus, meaning that CATCH are working with some of the most vulnerable people in the city.

Unsurprisingly, the CATCH hub has received one of the highest referral rates across all wards in Leeds, utilising over 100 new VAL volunteers responding to referrals from the Covid-19 helpline, in addition to their 50 existing volunteers.

The main challenge for the hub was the distribution of food to the local community and CATCH has worked with many local schools and organisations to ensure that families and individuals were able to access food supplies. [Hovingham Primary](#), a large school with over 800 pupils has maintained good connections to the families of their pupils and they have been working with Fareshare, Fareone, Rethink and Morrison’s to deliver around 100 food parcels a week to their most vulnerable families.

[St Aidan’s Church](#) also run their own non-means-tested, food-bank, which has seen demand more than double over the crisis (with 150 families accessing weekly), working with local organisations such as Give a Gift, Leeds Street Team, Leeds Muslim Youth Forum and supermarkets who are providing them with donations.

St Aidan’s work closely with [PAFRAS](#) (Positive Action for Refugees), who normally run a drop in from St Aidan’s for asylum seekers and refugees and who have continued to provide food parcels for this group of people throughout the coronavirus pandemic. The St. Aidan’s church organisers have commented that connections established within the ‘food aid network’ before the crisis, such as Fareshare, have been vital to cope with the increase in demand. Since the crisis, the church have established connections with residents groups and organisations outside of the Harehills area, who have in turn donated food and volunteering time. Local businesses have also been involved with donating food to the foodbank:

“I am extremely grateful to local businessmen/women in Harehills for showing true community spirit in supporting the food bank at Madina Gifts being set up by Leeds street team volunteers which is helping to support the St Aidan’s food bank, who are in desperate need. I’m particularly grateful to CC Hair & Beauty/CC Continental and the small family stores along Harehills road for your support. Particularly grateful to community

activists like Kaneez Khan, Idrees from CC and Moulana Mahboob for all your support, hard work and love to those in need.”

St Aidan's also offers a translation service to other 3rd sector organisations, translating Romanian, Farsi, Kurdish and other community languages, making communication with all communities easier.

[Neruka's Soup Kitchen](#) offered hot wholesome food and food parcels before Covid and still continues to work with some of the most vulnerable in the ward.

Recently community organisations in the area have grouped together to share surplus food to ensure none goes to waste. CATCH hopes that the food provision network that has been strengthened through the Covid-19 crisis will become a legacy and maintain a high presence of engagement with local communities in future times.

Other local businesses and organisations have adjusted their usual working practices to support covid19 work.

[Shine Business Centre](#) runs a social enterprise on Harehills Road. A significant part of their income is via room hire, but they have adapted to the crisis by keeping their doors open and managing the large space safely. Having partnered with Leeds Teaching Hospitals (they are in close proximity to St James University Hospital), Shine can offer safe space for staff training.

'[Action For Gipton Elderly](#)' is a well established older peoples charity, serving some of the most vulnerable elderly people in the local area. As they are a small charity they have adjusted their activities to ensure the elderly in the community were supported. Working with three different hubs that cover their area, they set up a free shopping service for those most vulnerable and at risk. They are actively working with the re-enablement teams to provide food for the housebound and delivering medications. They are providing a telephone support befriending service for all service users, plus daily support and prompting calls for people with dementia, depression and anxiety.

They have received many referrals for help from LLC help line and have met all of these including delivering a donated microwave and freezer so we could provide frozen meals for a 91 year old man discharged from hospital.

Continuing to supporting vulnerable communities in different ways when usually the work is face to face has been key. For young people [Get Away Girls](#) provide a free phone number where girls and young women can contact staff, along with positive messages on Instagram and support on Facebook. [Leeds Street Team](#) are continuing detached youth work and have a strong online presence to ensure the young people they work with stay safe during coronavirus. [The Beck Leeds](#) have been creating tailored welfare packs to give out to their young people. Like other projects, The Beck Leeds use social media to connect young people to wider services such as The Market Place, Leeds Survivor-led Crisis Support and Mindmate.

[Shantona Women's Centre](#) has been involved supporting their clients who are experiencing domestic violence during the crisis (an issue that has increased since lockdown).

[People In Action](#) work with people in the area with learning difficulties, providing activity packs, support and a daily timetable of on line events including exercise, games and chats

via Zoom and utilising the technology to provide sign language communication to members, including an online talent contest, showing that a combination of fun activities and more serious support are vital in these times.

On a neighbourhood level, residents' Facebook groups offering mutual support are evident with groups such as [Harehills Community Watch](#) sharing volunteer opportunities and local connections for vulnerable people. It is clear that there is crossover in support between ward boundaries, and this is particularly evident within the Richmond Hill and Gipton areas of the city.

Case study 4: Beeston and Holbeck Ward

The Beeston & Holbeck ward of Leeds sits to the south of the city centre. This community has truly come together to support one another during the Coronavirus outbreak. There has been an outpouring of kindness, generosity and togetherness which cannot be understated. Here are a few examples of how local people are being supported.

The Community Care Volunteer Hub for this area of Leeds is [Slung Low](#); a theatre company who run the oldest social club in Britain. Whilst the social club may be closed for business, the Slung Low team are definitely not taking any time off. With the help of volunteers, they are now busy picking up shopping and prescriptions, delivering food parcels and hot meals, dog walking and carrying out welfare calls. They have also put together the beautiful LS11 Art Gallery; local people submit artwork which Slung Low are using to line the streets. This is a far cry from their usual role producing large community theatre performances, showcasing the work of artists in the Holbeck and running their Cultural Community College.

But the Slung Low team feel that they don't want to go back to exactly what they were doing before; they've discovered new areas of the local community which they previously had little contact with, new partnerships have formed with organisations they'd never been in touch with and amazing individuals have stepped up to help. Going forward in the short-term, Slung Low does have some plans to do some of their "normal" day-to-day work; they will be presenting outdoor performances to families and are even putting together a drive-thru show. The way they have completely changed their service delivery and adapted to Covid-19 is huge and has made a massive impact to the local community.

[Holbeck Together](#) are also involved in the effort to support residents of this ward. Their usual activities involve offering social and leisure activities, health and wellbeing support, and community transport and meals services. Now, instead of their regular activities, they are focussing solely on supporting vulnerable and isolated people, with befriending calls and delivering hot meals, shopping and activity packs. New working partnerships have been formed with St. Vincent's, KidzKlub and Age UK Leeds. The team even managed to deliver VE Day afternoon tea packages to local people, so they could celebrate VE day from the comfort of their own home.

Your Space has done a great job of adapting their usual services to continue to meet the needs of local people. They are a community, wellbeing and outreach service supporting residents across south and east Leeds. Your Space usually offer wellbeing groups and creative activities for people to access support, meet new people, build resilience, learn coping skills and be signposted to other services. With face-to-face contact being so limited, these groups have now moved online. Your Space is now providing community wellbeing Facebook groups, Zoom groups; including Chocolate, Chat and Chill, Journaling and #CreatetoConnect, and is working on online quizzes and bingo events, as well as a WhatsApp Wellbeing course.

Case study 5: Headingley & Hyde Park Ward

(Note: this case study was written by Behla Hutchinson from [Hyde Park Source](#) and originally appeared on the [Leeds Independent Life](#) website).

When Covid-19 lockdown struck in late March, Voluntary Action Leeds (VAL) and Leeds City Council (LCC) quickly responded to launch the Community Care Project. Alongside a central LCC helpline and food distribution, the 33 wards that make up the city were handed over to 33 organisations which became 'Community Hubs', responding to the needs of isolating households and linking local volunteers to offer support. Behla Hutchinson, the volunteer coordinator for Headingley and Hyde Park community hub Hyde Park Source, explains their role, the impact on Leeds communities, and the amazing work being done to help.

"When Voluntary Action Leeds made a city-wide plea for volunteers, over 7600 residents stepped forward, an astounding figure. We agreed to co-ordinate Headingley and Hyde Park, working closely with the amazing Pay As You Feel Community Café Rainbow Junktion; we were very lucky to have over 300 volunteers and an established food hub already functioning. The picture across Leeds was quite different for all 33 organisations; some wards were flooded with requests for help, were operating with far less volunteers and no food hub; so, hats off to each and every one of them!

There were many challenges in the first few weeks; we had to figure out how and where to get food, how best to respond to referrals and how to select and support volunteers. It was pretty stressful, but nothing in comparison to the situations many households found themselves in across Leeds. As more time has passed since lockdown started, we have got into more of a rhythm, although there are still unforeseen issues that come up and things are always changing. The next big hurdle will be how we return to our usual jobs, and step away from this project without leaving people in the lurch."

The impact of the crisis, both globally and here in Leeds, may be long lasting for everyone. For lots of individuals and businesses their lives and livelihoods have been changed unrecognisably. In response, many of them are showing a remarkable resilience, coming together as communities to support one another. We released the Local Survival Guide as a simple and effective tool to help independent businesses connect with customers and to encourage people to buy locally. All across the city, there has been positive local action from communities and organisations working together for the people most affected, as Behla has witnessed directly.

"Unfortunately, the people being hit the hardest have the least. The co-ordinated response has highlighted how many families are in need of support regardless of the current crisis; people who have fallen foul of the system and weren't linked to any support prior to this. I hope for these households, this will change things for the better, as it is much harder to remove support once it has been given.

On the positive side, this crisis has proven the power of people to do good, and the hidden strength of the Third Sector. As part of this, Hyde Park Source depends upon working in partnerships, operating on a tight budget, building relationships, knowing the communities we operate within and their strengths. All these were necessary to respond quickly and support the people who were in need effectively. There has definitely been more overlap between the Public, Private and the Third Sector, which have come together to work more collectively to tackle this crisis."

This holistic approach is essential. Community hubs respond to referrals passed by the council, along with direct requests from the community. They then speak to the individual to check what help they need: this could be accessing free food parcels from food hubs; organising a weekly shop using paid-for e-vouchers supplied by LCC; or collecting and delivering prescribed medication. Volunteers are selected from a database provided by VAL to link people together as a one-off or longer-term basis. Behla confirms the importance of all of this at Hyde Park Source.

“A huge benefit of this has been the relationships formed between volunteers and the people they have been supporting. They have shared conversations, thoughts, worries and hopes and these seemingly simple interactions have helped to connect communities and break down barriers. In our ward we have also worked really closely with a number of organisations

Leeds Grand Mosque, who have been running ‘Love in a box’ providing a food parcel and food delivery service; Interserve Justice, who have delivered LCC food parcels using their vans and drivers; Older Wiser Local Seniors (OWLS) for the over 60’s, delivering food and organising befriending calls; Oblong, who manage Woodhouse Community Centre and lead the Woodhouse and Little London Ward working with Gateway Church, Leeds African Communities and Woodhouse Mutual Aid Network.

And Rainbow Junktion, an amazing place dedicated to supporting people in need and offering open doors to anyone and everyone. They intercept food waste, provide a community hub for people to connect and be nourished no matter what their situation. Rainbow Junktion relies heavily on their amazing volunteers, and received donations from many sources The Real Junk Food Project surplus from: The Headingley Green Grocer, The Organic Pantry, Leeds Bread Coop, Mecca Bingo and other local businesses.”

Moving forward, there are positives to take from the lessons and behaviours learnt during this time. Having adapted from their usual activities, Hyde Park Source and others like them have confirmed their importance in connecting and supporting communities in Leeds. They hope to re-start their community groups and city projects in late summer operating in ‘the new normal’. Things will be very different, but Behla is hopeful that it is an opportunity for positive changes.

“There are already some really interesting conversations happening around the cities’ reaction to the crisis; what can we learn and change in order to be more resilient in the future? HPS care a lot about linking communities with unused spaces and land, this pandemic has really highlighted the importance of access to land, local food production and distribution. Although dried food parcels have been provided by LCC on mass, without local supplies of fresh fruit and vegetables it is very hard to provide people with a nutritional and balanced diet.

Leeds has so many unused spaces which could be converted into food producing gardens, there is a chronic problem of access to and ownership of these spaces but when communities take them on amazing things happen. The community share and learn skills, become more self-sufficient, healthier, more connected and resilient. I hope this crisis encourages more people to claim and transform local spaces and connect with their community.”

For now, Hyde Park Source and the 33 community hubs of Leeds continue their vital work. As well as engaging with those most in need, they are communicating how everybody can be involved and help out. Echoing the ethos of our Local Survival Guide, the message

from Behla is to come together as a community and support local people and local business.

“Across the city the main thing people can do right now is support their neighbours; VAL have made a great pack with advice around this. The other thing is to donate any spare items to local food hubs. In terms of businesses, we are usually on the look-out for donations of toiletries, toilet roll, cleaning products, and spare unperishable food – so get in touch with your local food hub if you have any spare.

Long term, I think supporting local food is one of the most important things you can do to affect change, cut out the supermarkets, the fast food chains, online everything stores and other multinational. Grow your own food or support Leeds Market, your local baker, butcher, greengrocer, veg box scheme, independent restaurants and cafes. Volunteer with a local gardening group, learn skills and take home free fresh fruit and veg, support local jobs, and a more sustainable system that is resilient in times of crisis will emerge.”

Case study 6: Middleton Park ward

Hamara is a community based organisation based in Beeston Hill they run a multitude of groups and activities in the centre, in the words of Shanaz Gul:

“The Hamara Centre is a hub based in the south of Leeds, we work citywide to promote health and well-being to individuals, and we work to support the wider determinants of health. What we want to do is raise aspirations, to build resilience and help the community, from young people all the way to older. We’ve got family work approach, we work restoratively with an asset based community development model. We are working to encourage each and every individual to work with us so we can support them to achieve the best that they can.”

Hamara are the hub organisation for the Middleton area. They receive approximately 12 – 15 referrals a day for food parcel or shopping requests. They operate a food-bank onsite where volunteers pick up the food parcels from and deliver to the referral’s address. In addition they are giving out hot meals average 70 a day. They intend to continue to do this during lockdown and are very sensitive to the needs of vulnerable household in their area. They have worked with a steady number of volunteers between 20 and 30 in number and have been really impressed by them. They hope to retain some of them to work with Hamara helping to run projects in the future.

Hamara have worked closely with a wide range of partners: **Touchstone, Rainbow junction, Families First team**, are all supporting with deliveries,. For the Families First team *‘it’s really helped them because they wanted to know how their families are doing and so can deliver food parcels and check in with them at the same time.’* Hamara have also been able to refer to the early help hub: *‘we’ve had a couple of incidences with families with very aggressive children, so we can refer to the early help rather than it be a social services referral.’* Hamara have been very appreciative of the flexibility of Fareshare: *‘[Fareshare](#) have been the star organisation they have been amazing supporting with food, really paying attention to what communities are needing and changing the food they provide based on this information.’*

The council link worker has helped the source the use of 2 chest freezers at [Manorfield Hall](#) in Middleton which has been very useful for storage. Manorfield hall have changed their service during this time to offer more support to local residents their main change has been a foodbank service from the centre for those wanting to come and pick up supplies. As organisations needed to move services online and still keep in touch with their communities **Health for All** organise sing along sessions for all to join in with. As well as their other Time To Shine activities , including Tai Chi, Poetry, IT advice plus an invitation for participants to get involved with their passion and share this with others. They have been offering telephone support with weekly calls and wellbeing support to their service users as well as providing food parcels, activity packs and emotional support. They have also been able to offer 1:1 support to young people in the local park.

‘There also a number of opportunities for volunteers who would like to run some groups on subjects they are passionate and informed about. Please get in touch if you’d like to use these circumstances to share your passions with others and contribute to keeping spirits up’ [South Leeds Life article](#)

To keep young people entertained activity packs are being sent out by **Skipkko** and **Middleton Family Centre**, who have also been offering food as part of their Healthy holidays programme. [Lychee Red Chinese Seniors Project](#) kept connected to each

other by organising talent contests on line., *'we are following government guidelines #stayathome #savelives #protectNHS , but we are still connecting to the world by our individual talent performance online to fight the loneliness'*.

DAZL- have a good offer across the ward and have adapted to the change in circumstances by changing activities to socially distanced events and online resources. Projects for fitness like **Garden Groovers**, and **Delivering social distancing dance and physical activity** for 5 local primary schools as well as arts activities, support for parents and creating a mental health podcast.

Leeds Baby Bank have continued to raise money and ask for donations and have worked alongside Hamara for essential items for new mothers and babies.

Businesses like **B &M Bargains** have supported projects with donations.

In summary although the work has been hard, Hamara wish to focus on the positive: with future joint working with their neighbouring hub leads **Involve Leeds** and **Slung Low** and an awareness of how many different communities are working together to support each other. *'So many communities have been brought together. Everyone is willing to help.'*

Case study 7: Morley North and Morley South wards

The Morley wards have been supported by a number of organisations who have adapted their usual work streams to respond to the Covid19 situation.

Before the Coronavirus outbreak, [Groundwork](#) based in Morley, Leeds provided social and environmental regeneration services, working alongside local communities to transform places, spaces and people's opportunities.

Groundwork is currently running the hub for the Morley North, Morley South and Robin Hood and Ardsley wards. They manage over 50 volunteers, working with over 400 clients, with an average of 100 tasks a day, consisting of 46% welfare calls and the other 54% consisting of shopping, prescription collection and delivery, dog walking and deliveries of up to 80 food parcels per week.

Links have been made with the [Mobile Haberdashery](#) who has supported all Groundwork hub volunteers by donating handmade face masks. The 'Marvellous Mask Making Team' have never met one another, but make links on Facebook. Not only has this project delivered masks to dozens of organisations around Leeds including hospitals it has provided boredom relief for many people who have had to self-isolate. They have reported that they have 'had a sense of purpose'; others feel good for having 'stepped up'. Collection of these masks have had been with social distancing in mind so bin lids, garden chairs and bushes have been used as pick up points

[Morley Elderly Action](#) are ensuring that their members are getting what they need whilst being in isolation: through their phone line they have, directed people to food banks, provided shopping services and arranged medication deliveries, They have also sent out a newsletter to over 1000 people with guidance on how to stay safe and how to access support. They have a regular phone welfare calls that run every weekday during the crisis.

[The Trussell Trust](#) are continuing to support families in the local area with food parcels and are working with Groundwork to ensure that those in need receive the provisions they need.

In order to support people with fuel poverty, one of Groundwork's existing projects, [the Green Doctor](#), has been repurposed to provide telephone support and support people with top ups for their prepay meters as partners who normally deal with this have been busy dealing with unprecedented levels of demand.

There has been a general feeling that local communities have really appreciated the fast response to the Covid19 crisis: 'The community are much more aware that charities have been around during the crisis, that they have back-flipped into the unknown and developed a safe way of service delivery finding ways of keeping volunteers and clients safe'.

Case study 8: Otley and Yeadon ward

Otley had organised a system for supporting local people before the LCC Covid response had been set up. [Otley Action for Older People \(OAOP\)](#) working with [Otley Town Council](#), [Otley Courthouse](#), [Otley Churches Together](#) and [Otley Food bank](#) had set up a system for people over and under 60 who needed help and support with shopping, food, phone support, a three day a week fish and chip run and errands. A leaflet was created and delivered to all Otley residents. A week after this system was developed OAOP had a call to ask if they would become a hub.

OAOP is a long established and successful community-based organisation working on behalf of the older population of Otley, Pool and Arthington. OAOP is part of the Leeds Neighbourhood Network Schemes (NNS's). Although OAOP were willing to get involved it meant several challenges that they needed to deal with: the age range that they represented included all ages and the area they were asked to cover was the whole ward rather than the LS21 postcode they are funded to support. They found the change to supporting young families challenging as they often had financial difficulties to manage as well. The change meant that they were working 50 hour weeks at the beginning of the pandemic outbreak.

Once the referral system and the volunteer offers started to come through a system was set up whereby Otley Courthouse managed the volunteers and OAOP dealt with referrals. The method of referrals reflects their speedy covid19 response: because of the leaflet drop, OAOP and other local organisations were rung directly rather than going through the LCC helpline. So although the referrals from LCC were 7 a day at their peak and a total of 175 as of 12th June, the direct referrals totalled 100 a week with 50 regular requirements a week as well as an additional 51 weekly extra requests.

As well coordinating the volunteers for Otley, the Otley Courthouse continued to entertain locals with quizzes, virtual art exhibitions, recitals, and comedy events.

[Otley Makerspace](#) were involved with making PPE equipment for NHS staff using 3D printers at local schools they also created cloth facemasks for residents to have.

[The Otley Bid](#) and Town Council supported local businesses by advertising which businesses were active, running deliveries and together with the town council has developed packs for businesses – face masks, hand gel and tape for marking out 2 metre distancing now that shops are opening.

[Otley Fire Service](#) worked with Boots Pharmacy and OAOP to help with prescription pick up and delivery.

More locally WhatsApp provided support to local people where information is shared, support is both offered and requested, books and DVD'S swapped and the a community book exchange was developed. One local resident was making scrubs and scrub bags out of old sheets, duvet covers and pillowcases.

In Yeadon, Simon & Becky's Greengrocers started up an extra slot at a roadside location in Yeadon where they packed pre-ordered veg boxes in advance and then put them in the boot of your car when you pulled in to collect.

Case study 9: Pudsey and Calverley & Farsley wards

Pudsey Community Project (PCP), a project born out of Pudsey Parish Church and developed by Rev Richard Dimler and volunteers, was in a 9 month process of being set up as there was a recognised need of support particularly for youth work and young families in the area, as well as single people with no family networks. It was an embryonic organisation in July 2019 and three days before lockdown started, the project was formerly established. It now has three trustees and are the process of completing the forms for charity status and organising a separate bank account. It has been noted that this is not an ideal time to formally set up a new project!

With the advent of Covid 19 the PCP knew that they needed to be involved with the response effort. Rev Richard Dimler was aware of how the other hubs were being set up and the sort of organisations that were running them and knew that there wasn't anything like this in Pudsey.

'We knew that we could do the work and it's better to know that you've done it rather than thinking you could have done it and did nothing. And there was no one else in the local area who could manage it.'

At the planning stages it was realised that Hub work needed to cover the Calverley and Farsley Ward and so PCP linked up with St Wilfred's and St John's Churches and Farsley Live at Home in this area with support from the local councillors. The work of the hub has been dealing with food parcels and shopping, prescriptions, and befriending.

The main bulk of the work is food: making up food parcels, delivery and sourcing food. PCP found that the food parcels from the LCC warehouse were not enough and they needed to double what they were collecting in order to meet demand. The generous donations from locals, now diminishing, were being used anything else that is needed is funded by the Church. The project is seeing £4,000 worth of food going out to local people each week.

The number of referrals up to 11 June has been 1,062. In the first week of setting up they were averaging 100 a week referrals, the now have 48 repeat referrals each week. They all start off as one offs and then some are repeats. *'We review the repeats weekly, get volunteers to call them, check if they need anything else sanitary towels, nappies etc. So they are getting what they need and not what we think they need.'*

There have been a regular and steady number of volunteers averaging 40 – 45 a week and they have 4 staff members to staff the drop in. The team comprises of organising prescriptions and shopping collection, also delivery people, admin support, staffing phones and making up food parcels. Volunteers are made up 50 / 50 of Church volunteers and Community Cares Volunteers.

There has been a well organised system of food donations in both wards with [Calverley Church](#), [St John's Church Farsley](#) and [St James the Great Woodhall](#) organising food collections from the local community that is delivered to the PCP. These churches are also supporting their local areas with online programmes for all church attendees with a wide range of programmes that support children and adults. With talks, coffee mornings and video call meetings.

PCP use Facebook and messenger to communicate with the community, either to ask for donations, thank organisations for donations *'We are hugely grateful to the huge donation*

brought in from the [Pudsey Panthers rounders team](#) who just brought so much food for food parcels it almost broke the tables!' and to ensure that any one off perishable donations get distributed out to those who need it before it goes off. This system works very well with a lively response from locals.

The [Swinnow Community Centre](#) in the neighbouring hub has received donations of food from PCP and have gathered a good partnership with local food providers to distribute to local people.

Businesses like [One Stop](#) have been able to donate food to the PCP and financial donations have been received from [Calverley Rotary Club](#) – who continue to organise food collections by asking people to donate 'lunch money' that they currently aren't spending to pay for fresh fruit and vegetables.

The Rotary club have also made a donation to the [Farsley Live at Home Scheme](#) for them to make wellbeing activity packs to members. They include a lockdown memories journal, card making kits, sunflower growing kits and puzzles and have been well received by their members.

Richard has great experience of interagency networking and has seen the value in this with the Covid19 work. There are no neighbour hood schemes. The PCP hub has worked closely with local primary schools and the local children centres 3 across the two wards, they've received direct referrals and work closely with them specifically supporting the individuals and families.

As there are a large number of families in the local area and schools have different levels of capacity the PCP have found that some of the schools are taking to people outside of their own pupils.

For young people [Southroyd School Pudsey children's centre](#) have had an active online presence encouraging children with their online work and pointing them to relevant events and special days like the #stephenlawrenceday and Florence Nightingale 200th Anniversary of her birthday.

What's next

As time goes on and the referrals from the Community Cares programme are dropping they are receiving increasing numbers of direct referrals from Facebook. This has started the process for PCP to plan what happens next and how PCP can start to include the work that has occurred as a result of Covid 19 as well as pick up the work that they set out to do pre-Covid.

They can see that there will be a continued need to support people with the impact of Covid19 for many months in the future, and now with an emphasis of addressing other ongoing issues impacting on people.

Working with families, befriending, parents with mental health problems and young children and youth work are seen as important work to continue. Helping people to connect is a central theme. PCP can see that there will be a need to keep the food bank but sees that it will become less about ways of feeding people and more about recognising a more holistic approach of working.

Reflecting on the whole Covid response Richard said that the building and 25 existing church volunteers have been the backbone of the service.

'It's been a combination of 2 things. It's really good collaboration with the church structure and volunteers stepping forward when things are needed. If it wasn't for the church then this response wouldn't have happened.'

The final reflection is on the importance of getting work done regardless of who gets the accolade:

'It's amazing what you can achieve if you don't mind who gets the credit'

Case study 10: Rothwell ward

[MHA Rothwell & District Live at Home \(Rothwell LAH\)](#) is one of the 37 Neighbourhood Network Schemes working with older people in Leeds. They are also one of the five live at home schemes part of the MHA charity groups. Their remit is to run groups like soup and sandwich lunch clubs and they cover the area that includes Rothwell, Methley Kippax, Lofthouse, Thorpe Carlton, Ardsley and Robin Hood.

They were asked to consider whether they would be a hub. They agreed as there were no other organisations that had come forward, although they were unsure of what the work would entail they thought that if it didn't work out they could withdraw.

The work that the hub undertook was food organising and phone calls.

Initially they had no idea how they were going to coordinate the food side of things and a lucky meet with Cllr Diane Chapman when they were both meeting with the Morrison's Community Champions, a system began to emerge in terms of sourcing food as well as a great resource in Diane who is part of the hub team.

The food was sourced either through **Morrisons**, donations from **Woodsford Co –op**, **Arla Foods** and Leeds City Council food parcels. These donations would be redistributed to ensure that each food parcel to families or individuals had enough food to last for a week. Other food provisions are a pay as you can system in the hub building where people can come and have two bags of food for whatever they could afford as well as a Paid for Shopping service where they would buy gift cards that people would then pay for.

Rothwell LAH have a strong cohort of 50 volunteers in usual times and this number shrunk to 15 because of volunteers individual circumstances. Three of these work at the hub and others are making calls.

They have used the Community Cares Volunteers – around 30 of the 100 that had been given to them. Volunteers were used for ringing up the referrals, doing the shopping and then delivering it. The system worked better with volunteers opting for the roles that suited them best, rather than one volunteers doing the whole shop and delivery. Other volunteer activities were welfare calls, there was an average of 150 telephone calls; some weekly and other some 2/3 times a week.

[The Fair Exchange](#) is a small community organisation that run groups and activities in the LS26 area. During lockdown their usual activities have been suspended and instead groups have been supporting each other with check in phone calls, online groups, including a CBT course for the Mental Health group, as lockdown restrictions have eased some members have met in Rothwell Park.

Some neighbourhoods have organised street parties, to commemorate the Queen's Birthday and VE day and book exchanges have been established.

One aspect of the work that Rothwell LAH realised was the lack of community groups in the local area: *'It's proved in Rothwell there are no other organisations who have come through in this area it's leafy and green but still got pockets of deprivation, I don't know of any other organisation who were available to help. It makes you see what is and isn't in the community.'*

Case study 11: Wetherby and Harewood wards

Wetherby in Support of the Elderly (WiSE) is a registered charity organisation part funded by Leeds City Council. Their aim is to improve quality of life for the over 60's by providing community based activities, information, help and support. It is one of the 37 Neighbourhood networks across the city. As well as the Leeds City Council (LCC) Neighbourhood Networks grant they have other funding including a partnership with Children in Need.

The first day of lockdown WiSE agreed to become a hub lead for Wetherby and Harewood Wards, taking the pressure from other organisations that didn't have the capacity to take on the role.

W-ISE realised that their normal way of setting up a project was not possible to do and so just had to improvise with what they had.

'The challenge was that normally when a project starts there's time to plan, trail and then run it. In this situation we had referrals and volunteers with no system to hook them too. So we worked backwards – as the phone number came out very quickly we distributed this at that time we had no idea of food supplies, vouchers, prescriptions , we only had our first volunteer'

The system slowly followed this with the e-voucher shopping system and later the portal. Both systems WiSE have found very helpful.

For food supplies WiSE worked with **Fareshare** and topped up supplies by using the grant money from LCC to buy food.

Referrals started to come in at the same time as volunteers through the Community Cares volunteers and along with WiSE's existing volunteers, tasks were allocated to those best suited for the job required.

W-ISE worked alongside other groups who were operating in the wards.

Harewood is a clued up part of the world with other voluntary groups working in the local areas: [Wetherby Lions](#), Church groups, and the **Wetherby and District Food Bank**, were all supporting local people in their own ways. And communities in the two wards' villages like Clifford, Thorner, Scholes and Barwick have used methods like the Nextdoor app to keep in touch and support each other.

In Boston Spa **St Mary's Church** supported the community with online services. **The Boston Spa festival** was able to host the annual scarecrow festival, despite the main festival being cancelled. As lockdown continues to ease the **Boston Spa running club** is now organising weekly running meet ups and although the Boston Spa Festival had to be cancelled the Scarecrow Festival will be happening.

WiSE are confident that they have managed this challenging situation very well within the system they had been given. They feel that if needed they are well placed to running a hub to support a larger area of the city if this was required.

'We've handled this in a professional way and applied a professional model. Our organisation is well placed to do the work, if we use this system we can quite comfortably take on work from around the city'