



Suicide Prevention Co-Production

A 2-year volunteer led co-production project

Contents

Background	2	Podcast	39
Recruitment, induction & support	5	Other involvements & consultations	45
Community Conversations	15	Co-production reflections & learning	53
Staff Training Films	22	Conclusion	64
Lived Experience Guidelines	28		
Book of Cope	31		
Bereavement Leaflet	36		



Background to Project

This project was funded to address challenges in suicide prevention work across West Yorkshire. Leeds Mind were directly funded by the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership with the support of Mind in Bradford to ensure coproduction was at the heart of suicide prevention across West Yorkshire.

All of our work around suicide prevention & postvention champions peer support and seeks to shine a light on the importance of lived experience.

Often in our front-line services, we see how service users are not fully understood and the impact that this can have on their support, their engagement, and the detrimental impact on every aspect of their life.

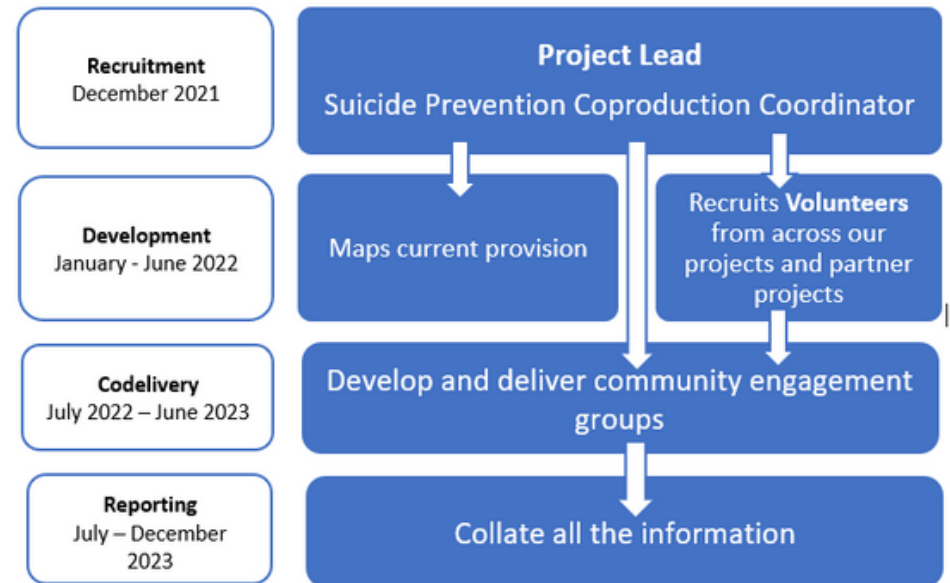
This project aimed to involve and empower individuals with lived experience of suicide in the shaping of system-wide changes in the West Yorkshire area.

It sought to champion coproduction as a method for sustainable and impactful approaches to suicide prevention.

We aimed to make this happen through creating a series of smaller projects, resources, and partnerships. All our outputs will act as legacy pieces, that will continue to have an impact, long after the project's funding runs out.

Due to recruitment and appointment, the project started March 2022 which delayed the overall delivery of the project.

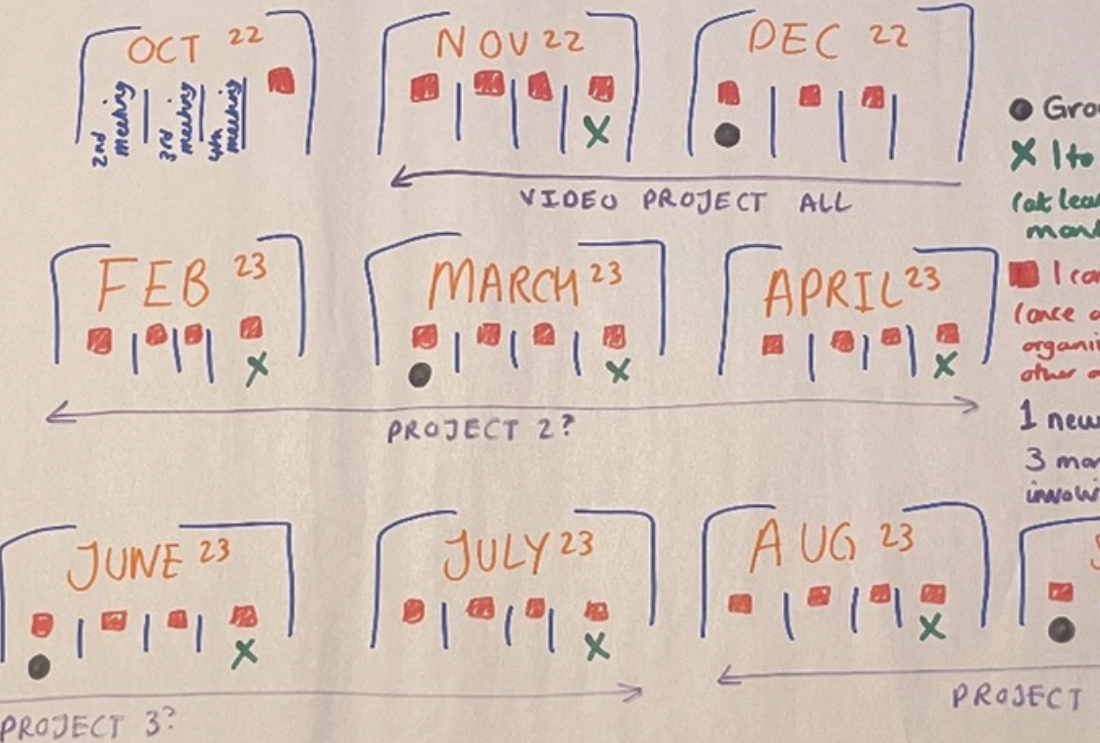
Planned delivery



The structure of the project was designed so that it would be a 'blank slate' for volunteers to design and deliver, in line with the overall project aims as detailed on the next page.



TIMELINE



Our Goals

1

Reduce stigma around mental health and suicide.

2

Raise awareness.

3

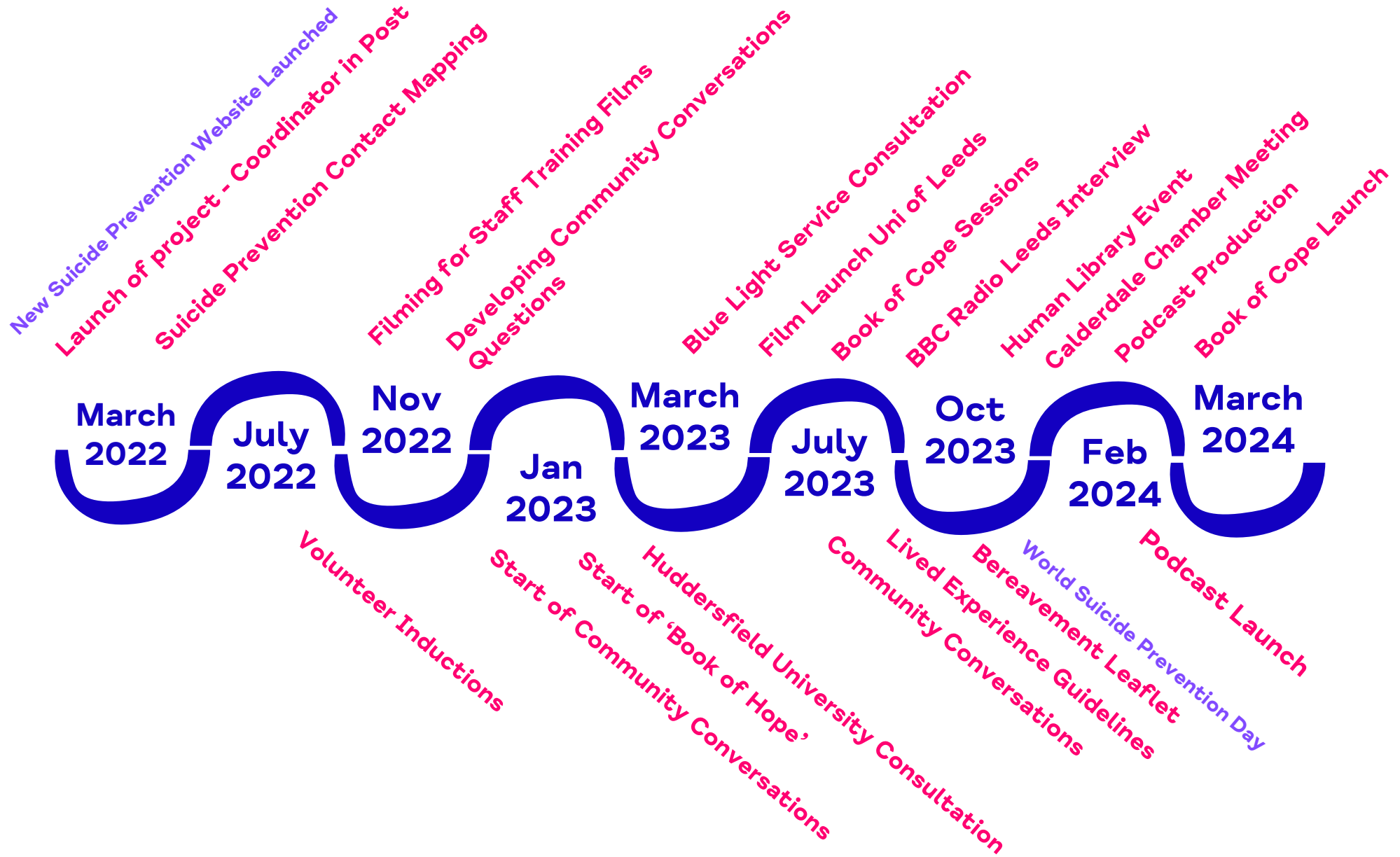
Champion the voices of people with lived experience.

4

Challenge and influence decision makers to improve mental health support for clients and families.

“I hope to achieve positive change for others; ideally, a more refined, one point of entry mental health system that doesn’t adversely affect people’s mental well-being, that is fit for purpose. But also, to raise awareness of suicide and get more people talking about it openly in conversation. The people who have had the courage to ask me about suicide are the ones who have facilitated me getting some more support. If everyone knows how to correctly ask about suicide and talk about suicide we could save more lives, which is the ultimate goal.”

Project Delivery



Recruitment, Induction & Support for Volunteers

The recruitment process happened throughout the project but initial recruitment took place between March 2022 and October 2022.

Volunteers shared that they felt well supported throughout the recruitment and induction process as well as the wider project work over the two years.

Volunteers received mandatory training, an induction and had options for further training and several development opportunities such as speaking at Public Health & Integrated Care Board (ICB) events.

We were flexible and open with volunteers with regards to their involvement, ensuring to make reasonable adjustments to the recruitment, induction and supervision processes.





Projects

Community Conversations	15
Staff Training Films	22
Lived Experience Guidelines	28
Book of Cope	31
Bereavement Leaflet	36
Podcast	39
Other involvements & consultations	45

Community Conversations

The 'Community Conversations' project aimed to capture people's views on what has worked well, what didn't work and if anything was missing from mental health services and support.

We went out and spoke to local people across West Yorkshire about their experiences of accessing mental health support in terms of:

- What worked well
- What didn't work
- What was missing

This was later supplemented by an online survey with the questions we formulated.

This has culminated in a written report which maps out the findings and makes recommendations for future care.



Staff Training Films

We created a series of short films to reinforce good practice amongst staff working in health and care.

'Preventing suicide: communication, support and follow-up' is relevant to anyone working in health and care to hear perspectives from those with lived experience connected to suicidal crisis.

They serve as a staff training resource to encourage good practice from staff. After watching the films, staff are given prompts for discussion, asking them how the films made them feel and what they might now do differently having watched them.

- [Communication](#)
- [Support](#)
- [Follow-up](#)

Read about this on the Suicide Prevention Website [here](#)

Watch the film [here](#)

Contents



Lived Experience Involvement: Guidelines for Best Practice

Following a difficult external lived-experience event, we created a new resource called ‘Lived Experience Involvement – Guidelines for Best Practice’, which you can read and download on our [Website](#).

This resource is aimed at all staff working within health and care who involve people with lived experience in their work. Involving people with lived experience might take the form of service design, inviting people with lived experience to sit on an interview panel, or on an advisory group. There are many forms it can take!

Our volunteers have drawn upon their own lived experience of involvement, and on the Mind ‘Influence and Participation’ toolkit to create this resource.

We encourage everyone to read it, use and share it. It’s suitable for anyone working in health and care, whether you’re experienced in lived experience involvement, or are just starting out.

[Blog Post](#)

Contents



Lived Experience Involvement

Our guidance for best practice

Created by Leeds Mind Suicide Prevention Volunteers

Book of Cope

The 'Book of Cope' celebrates and shares the different strategies people from West Yorkshire use to boost their mental wellbeing, to help others when facing their own challenges.

We came up with the idea for 'Book of Cope' when we were talking about coping strategies and how important peer support can be on your mental health journey.

We went out and about holding drop-in sessions across West Yorkshire, for people to design their own creative pages for the book. We also accepted online submissions.

This culminated in a 44 page book of coping strategies which are categorised by the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing'.

Read the Book [here](#)

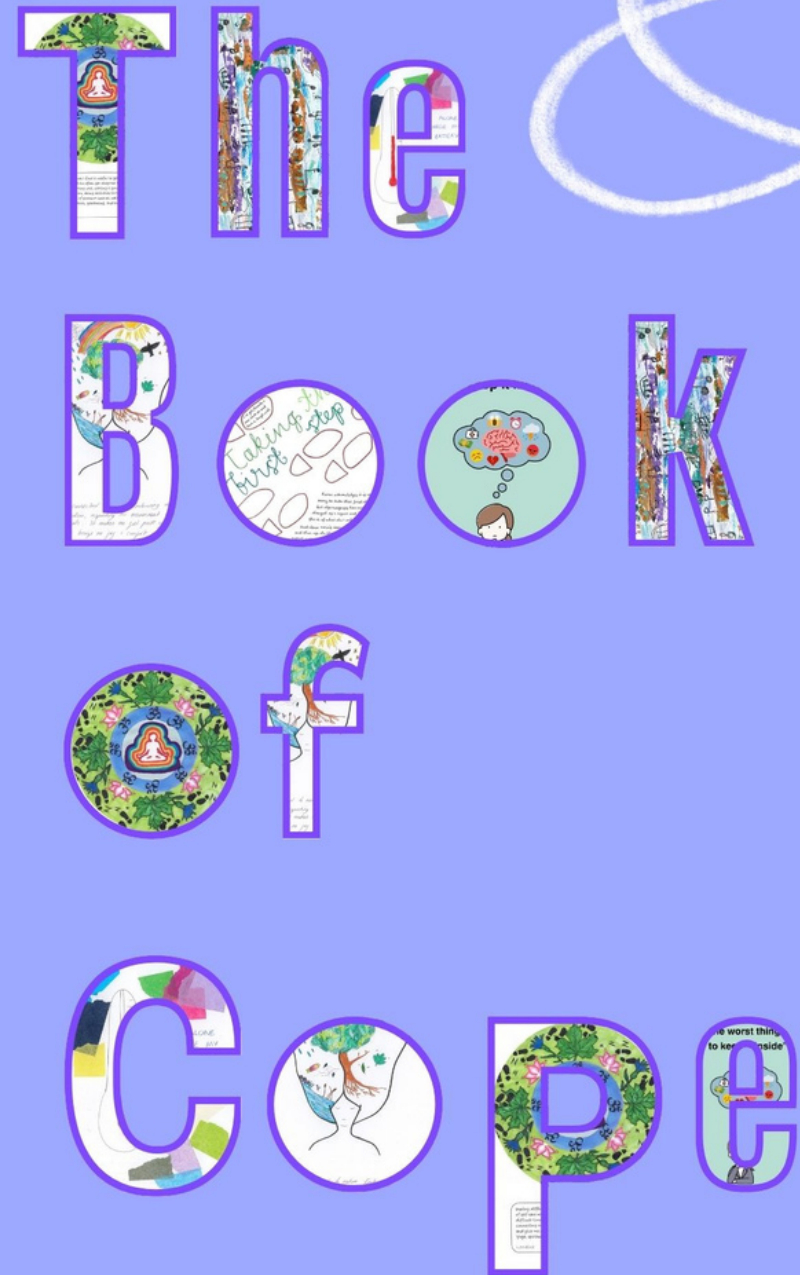
Contents



West Yorkshire
Health and Care Partnership



 Mind Leeds



Bereavement Support Leaflet

Created in collaboration with Leeds Mind Suicide Bereavement Service, this leaflet was created to offer simplified and concise support to those bereaved by suicide.

This project utilised lived experience of bereavement by suicide to understand the support and signposting needs when going through a “trauma like no other”

A tri-fold suicide bereavement support leaflet was produced by the volunteers and the Suicide Bereavement Service.

In conjunction with this, volunteers wrote a [blog post](#) about how they kept themselves well throughout their bereavement. This is linked to in the leaflet.

Download the leaflet [here](#)

Contents



West Yorkshire
Suicide Prevention



We're here for you.

A pocket resource of support
available to anyone impacted by
suicide.

You are not alone.

Surviving Crisis: Learning from Lived Experience Podcast

We created a podcast series with the aim of supporting staff who work with people in mental health crisis.

The series – ‘Surviving Crisis: Learning from lived experience’ – consists of five episodes, each 20-30 minutes long and covering different themes.

The episodes have been developed using insight from frontline health and care staff, who were asked in advance to share their thoughts and opinions on what they would like to hear discussed.

The five episodes can be found on our [Leeds Mind Spotify](#) and on the [West Yorkshire Suicide Prevention Website](#), with episode one taking a look at what staff might want to ask a person with experience of suicidal ideation that they feel they can't ask in every day work.

Listen [here](#)

Contents



West Yorkshire
Health and Care Partnership



Surviving Crisis: Learning from Lived Experience

A Leeds Mind Suicide Prevention podcast

Other involvements & consultations

Throughout the course of the project, we have been involved in several events, involvements and consultations.

While these have not been fully co-produced as the group did not initiate and design these involvements, we have been able to share our lived experience to inform various practice, strategy and research.

Involvements have included:

- [Research Project on the role of pharmacies in suicide prevention](#)
- [Consultation on the use of memorials](#)
- [Chamber Meeting](#)



Overall Reflections & Conclusions

Our project group has felt positive about this Suicide Prevention Co-Production Project.

We have reflected on each of the projects and pieces of work we completed in terms of the impact for policy makers, frontline services, the public and those who provided their lived experience perspectives.

The next section will reflect on:

- Overall impact on volunteers
- The role and value of co-production
- External impact & perspectives

Contents



Meetings, engagements and promotion over the project

Contents



Engagements over the project - UK/ WY wide wide



Role of Coproduction

Many of us had never been involved in co-production and so we reflected on our feelings on the role of and importance of co-production.

“[coproduction is] massively important – lived experience is massively key.”

“I think co-production is invaluable because even if you don’t have an idea and you’re sat in a meeting, you might come away 3 days later and have a spark/ ingenious idea. Next thing you know, we are all bouncing off each other”

“I’ve never had anything to do with co-production until this – I like how it works, having many minds together on a constant basis. You get different outcomes from their different experiences.”

“[it is] absolutely paramount! The number of ideas, perspectives, experiences that have shaped the design, delivery, and implementation that have come from lived life experiences is so invaluable”

Volunteers were extremely positive about the role of coproduction and have been very sad to see the project come to an end.

“I feel it’s really important – got to have people who know what it feels like – its not something that’s done to service users, that should be part of the picture... done with, rather than to.”

Overall Impact on Volunteers

1 Solidarity & Peer Support

“Being able to talk freely about something that you know only a few people understand is a really freeing experience, it unleashes something in you”

“[it] has helped me feel less alone and part of a community.”

2 Voice being heard

“Personally, I feel seen, heard, I have found my voice again through this project.”

3 Growth in confidence and self-esteem

“I feel I have grown in confidence, self-worth, & self-esteem. I have found that spark again, something that I believe in & want to be part of every step of the way wherever possible.”

“I didn’t really know i had a quotable way of speaking until this project.”

4 Reaching those with influence

“I feel I have been given an amazing opportunity to be a part of something that is so integral & pivotal in system change within mental health (NHS) and beyond.”

5 Meeting new and different people

“It has been great meeting different people from so many walks of life, who usually I would never cross paths with, and coming together for such a good cause.”

6 Hearing a range of perspectives

“Working with other people with lived experience is very humbling. There are people from all walks of life and backgrounds which allows different opinions and views, this is invaluable. No two people have been through the same experience, so we have been able to reflect on an idea in a different way.”

Reflections and Learnings

Focus on bereavement

10 of our volunteers who were involved in the overall project at some stage have been bereaved by suicide.

Considering this, it feels that perhaps there could have been a greater focus on and conversations around bereavement by suicide.

Indeed, one of our volunteers felt that there was only a small part of this project that they could support with due to the unexpected nature of their family member's passing, not being known to any mental health services.

Accessibility of involvement

A few volunteers commented that they found evening meetings challenging to attend due to long working hours, work-life balance and other commitments. It would be important in any future project to consider how to maximise a range of engagement when people have different availability.

Some volunteers also would have preferred to attend in person but due to distance and personal circumstances were unable to do so. There were discussions about rotating the location of the meetings to the various areas which could be a future consideration.

“I feel very content with the way I have been heard throughout the entire process, and all the various aspects of the project. I do believe, in my experience there was a fairness and balance throughout that was inclusive of all voices being heard regardless of what that looked like.”

“The project has been coordinated fantastically well throughout. I've always felt listened to and valued.”

“I feel like my voice was heard a little too much. I was always shown the upmost respect and if something I said was implemented it was done with respect and with regard to me as a person.”

Factors to consider for meaningful coproduction

It takes time

One reflection and learning many had was that co-production takes time as you have to consider and utilise a wide variety of ideas and perspectives. This was a source of frustration at times but we all understood and appreciated the time given.

Therefore, it is important to manage expectations around the time that co-produced projects might take.

Keep feeding back on progress

We have fed into lots of amazing projects, events and consultations run by other providers which have largely been positive experiences. One key learning from this is the importance of updating those who have shared valuable lived experience on any progress made and how you intend to use input.

“I’ve felt incredibly supported, heard, and validated, which is something I have little experience of when it comes to my mental health. Everyone is so friendly, and I really look forward to the group meetings as it provides everyone with an opportunity to catch up.”

“My experience of mental health services over several decades had been a very negative one. I was rarely asked my opinion, rarely listened to and rarely felt supported. The project was a sharp contrast to this – it gave me, and others like me, a voice.”

“It’s been a privilege to work in a group of people with shared lived experience. Everyone’s story is unique, but they share so many common characteristics. You’re not as alone as you may have thought. To work collectively and to advocate for others in this way is incredibly empowering.”

What we hope is the impact of this project

- 1** More funding for Coproduction Approaches and Projects
- 2** Embedding lived experience voices and coproduction into local and regional suicide prevention strategic and frontline work
- 3** Resources to be used to improve staff approaches to care and support for people prior to, during and after crisis and/ or bereavement
- 4** See meaningful changes in local and regional approaches, policies and strategies
- 5** Inspire and inform other lived experience and coproduction work in Third Sector and Statutory Services
- 6** Greater investment in suicide prevention and mental health work

“Where do I begin.... systematic change, to give a voice to those that have been silenced for so long. That the government will take notice and invest in the mental health system utilising people with lived life experience to coproduce a much-needed systematic change.”

“I hope it carries through to making change and encouraging more funding that's desperately needed in mental health support. Having been involved in this project for two years and following numerous conversations with people with lived experience and with practitioners, I firmly believe that more money, well spent is essential to saving more lives and that every life lost destroys countless others. This is a contagion that we simply have to address.”

What we hope is the impact of this project

“Wish we’d not had to do it at all. The NHS is broken. Resources tend to concentrate on downstream interventions. Upstream intervention is required.”

“I’m very hopeful that our labours come to something and that we get to hear about some meaningful change going forward. This would mean the world.”

“I want to use this platform as a means to create positive change... I would like to reduce the number of people who feel suicidal but also to try to create a world where people receive more kindness and compassion.”

“That someone understands that without hearing from people with lived experience, their attempts to improve our lives will almost always fall short of what’s required. That those with the power to change things are cogent and compassionate enough to understand that without us, there is no way forward that will realistically see suicide rates drop substantially.”

“It would be amazing if we could evoke changes in the law (specifically around the Personal Injury issues & whether those affected by the death have/have not actually witnessed the incident). The bereaved are likely to suffer lifelong from deaths by suicide and there are many effects/situations that the judicial system would not even be aware of let alone recognise.”

External Impact & Perspectives

Contents

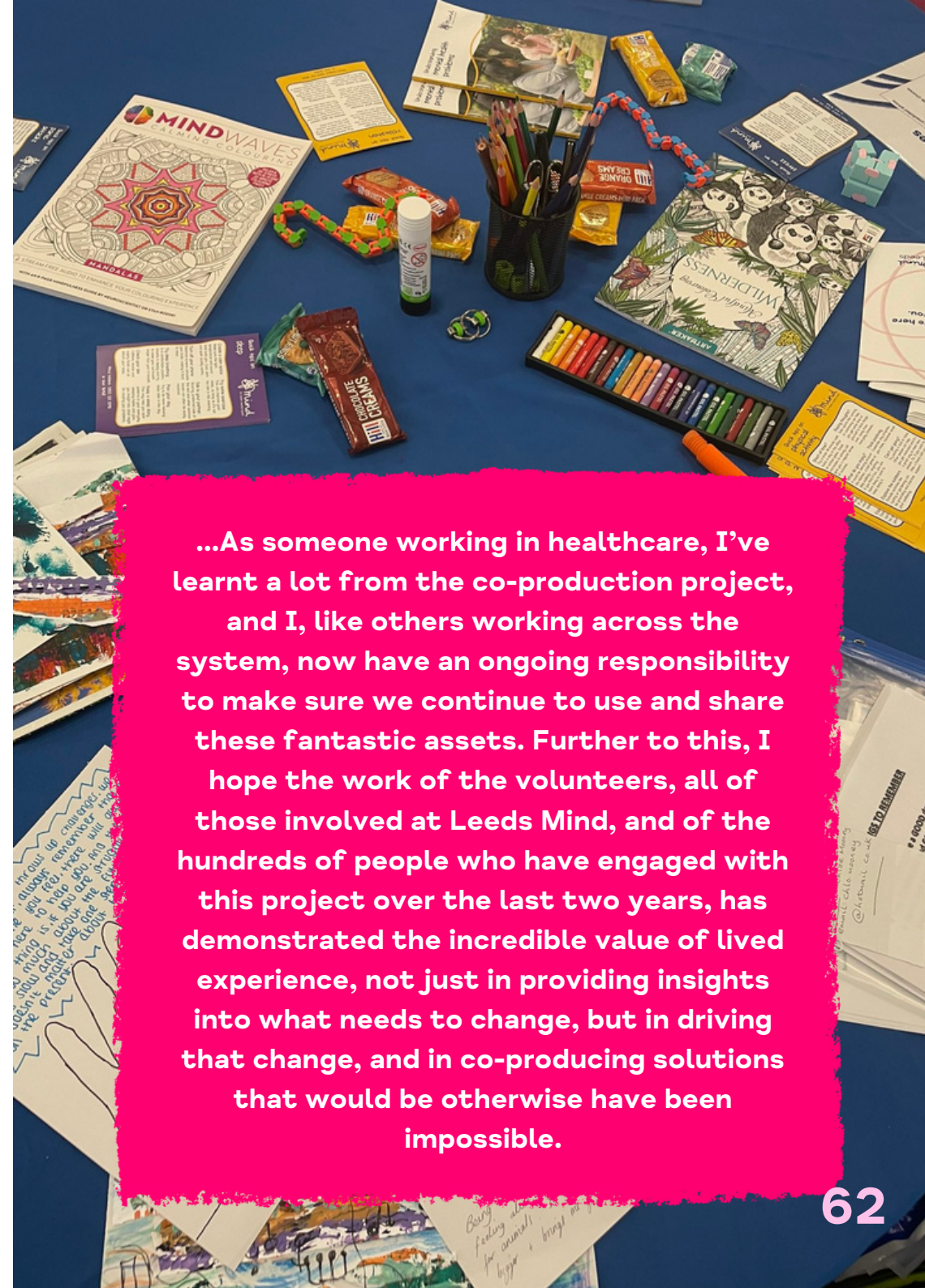


Our partners and those we have engaged with throughout the project have been incredibly complimentary about the work produced and have emphasised the need for this coproduction to continue.

Lead on ICB's Suicide Prevention Programme:

The phenomenal work done by the volunteers has already been incredibly valuable, and will continue to inform the way we think about suicide prevention, the way we provide services, and the way we involve lived experience, for many years to come. Not only has the work done helped inform and inspire people across the system around the need for change, but the resources produced support people working in health, care, and beyond, in realising this change, and ultimately, in achieving our ambition as a health and care partnership, to reduce the number of suicides in West Yorkshire...

...As someone working in healthcare, I've learnt a lot from the co-production project, and I, like others working across the system, now have an ongoing responsibility to make sure we continue to use and share these fantastic assets. Further to this, I hope the work of the volunteers, all of those involved at Leeds Mind, and of the hundreds of people who have engaged with this project over the last two years, has demonstrated the incredible value of lived experience, not just in providing insights into what needs to change, but in driving that change, and in co-producing solutions that would be otherwise have been impossible.



External Impact & Perspectives

Our partners and those we have engaged with throughout the project have been incredibly complimentary about the work produced and have emphasised the need for this coproduction to continue.

Senior Public Health Specialist, Bradford:

“I really value lived experience input, but it can be difficult to coordinate and recruit people to projects that have strict timelines to work to. This project has served as a really important reminder to prioritise this. These resources are completely unique, hold a real and personal perspective and help fill a bit of a void around peer support by sharing the voices of people with lived experience to others who may also be struggling and those who work with them. They transcend the timeline of the project. I hope to try and do more work involving people with lived experience.”

“Something that stood out for me, is that difference in opinion- and realising there may not be ‘a right way’ to do things. It’s a complex issue and everyone will experience it differently and have different suggestions/ thoughts/ opinions and feelings.

Lived experience isn’t a box ticking exercise, you can’t ask one person and be done. There is so much value in what people have to say, it adds a depth of knowledge and understanding and brings to life the things you are talking about everyday.”

- Public Health Practitioner, Calderdale

Contents





Conclusion

“This project has given a voice to so many that have been silenced”

We would like to say a huge thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers who have driven the fantastic outcomes of this project.

Thank you to all of those who attended our community conversations sessions; those who contributed to the Book of Cope.

Thank you to local Public Health Teams and the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership for championing the work we have done and anyone who we have liaised with and collaborated with over the course of the project.

This project has been integral to giving a voice to so many who have not been given a platform before.

We have demonstrated the importance of and need for lived experience involvement and coproduction in any work towards suicide prevention. Without this, solutions and approaches can never be effectively tailored towards local and individual needs.

This involvement should not be reserved solely for projects specifically funded for coproduction but should be embedded within all approaches towards suicide prevention and post-vention. Imperative to this is the need for coproduction to have resource and specialist support to ensure people sharing their expertise through lived experience are fully supported.

Therefore, lived experience voices should feature at all meetings with key decision makers and at every local and West Yorkshire wide strategy group.

The power of this project has been involving lived experience voices throughout the entire project and at all levels of influence.

It is important to keep lived experience experts consistently involved and avoid ‘one-off’ consultations. Therefore, it is important to continuously feed back on the impact of projects to demonstrate the impact of someone sharing their valuable lived experience.

We hope that this project is recommissioned in future and can continue to produce fantastic guidance and outputs for frontline practitioners and the wider public.

The importance of this work has been recognised by multiple external partners and key decision makers. This report aims to demonstrate the level of its impact and make a strong case for coproduction approaches across all suicide prevention work.

“I think it’s just a brilliant project and I wish someone would pick up the funding and it could carry on”

Find out more at: <https://www.leedsmind.org.uk/services/suicide-prevention-co-production/>



West Yorkshire
Health and Care Partnership



Leeds Mind

Clarence House
11 Clarence Road
Horsforth
Leeds
LS18 4LB

T: 0113 305 5800

www.leedsmind.org.uk

Registered charity number 1007625