

CAPACITY WRAPPED

A Year in Review



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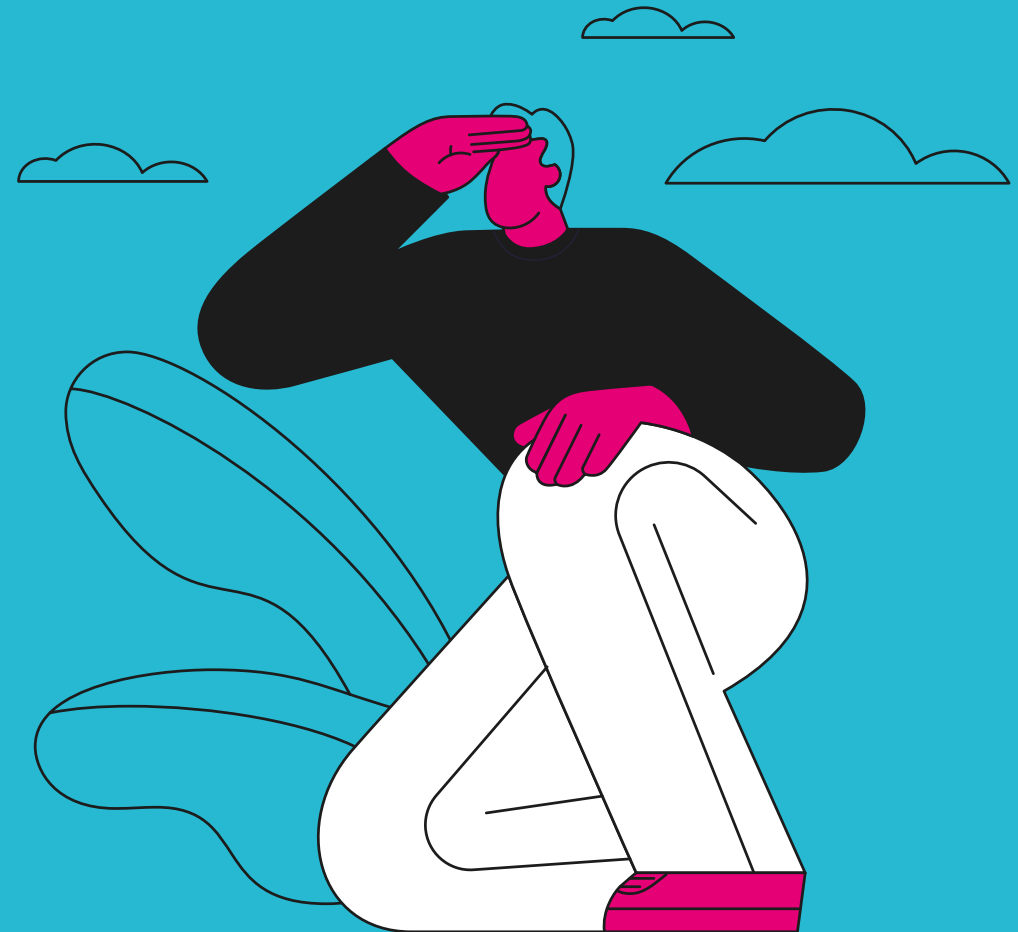
88 Thank you

92 Our members



Part one:

LAST YEAR AT A GLANCE



Let us start by saying that last year was a very busy one at Capacity. We've been hard at work bringing big-picture thinking, imagination and graft to help public and third sector leaders do things differently.

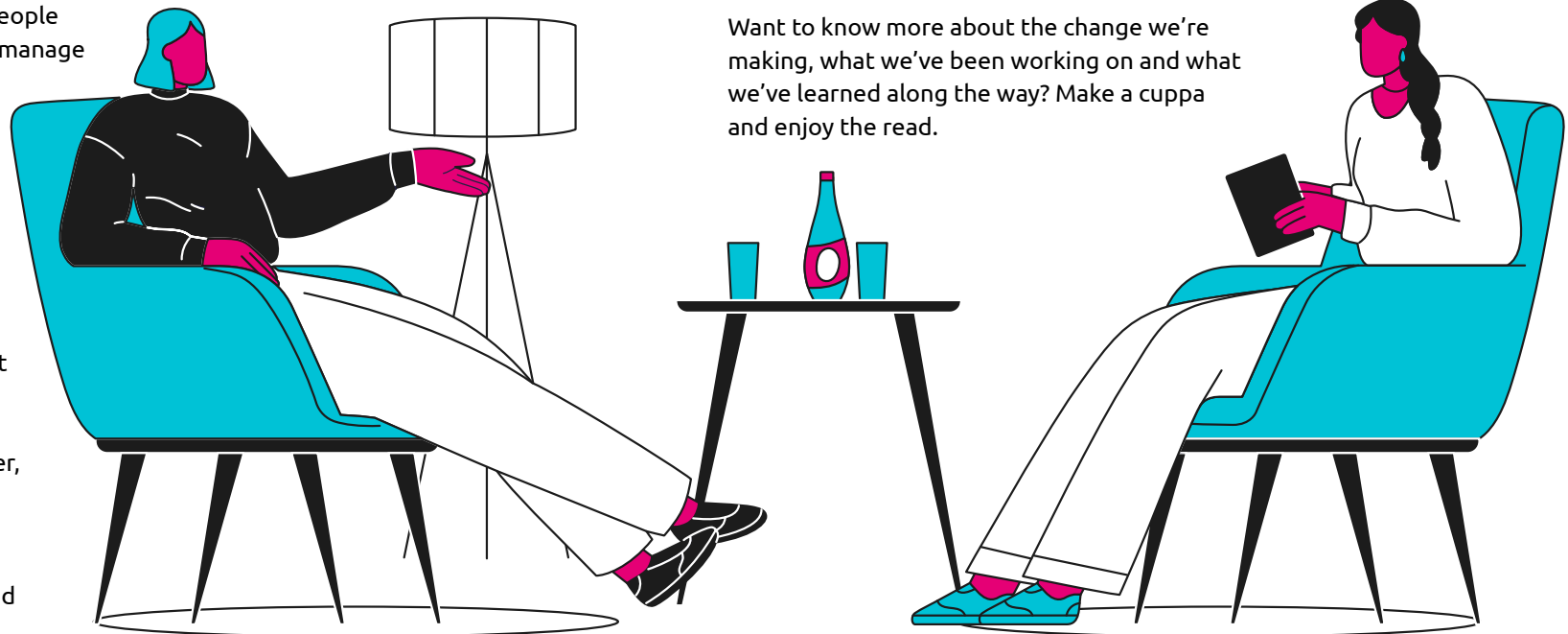
We worked with our partners to make public services people services

It's safe to say that public services and the third sector are facing some tough challenges. Between the cost of living crisis, pinched budgets and increasing demand for services, 2023 was no walk in the park. Despite this, we had the opportunity to work alongside some brilliant organisations to respond to these challenges together, providing our support to make sure their services have the biggest impact on the lives of local people.

We focused on issues that are at the heart of why we exist

We want to create real change for local people. With that in mind, we've been working with partners from across the North West to solve some of the region's stickiest issues. From supporting our partners to make sure people get access to the healthcare they need, to making sure people have the tools they need to manage their wellbeing, the work we delivered focused on a breadth of issues.

That being said, we also zoned in on one particular issue that's at the heart of why we exist - to make children's social care higher quality and purpose led. Last year, we not only launched our first venture, we also incubated a second. Together, Juno and Yonder will work to transform the landscape of children's social care in the Liverpool City Region and Cheshire.



We thought about how we make a bigger and bolder difference to the lives of local people

We spent a lot of time thinking about the unique role we play in creating change in the Liverpool City Region and Cheshire. Our first 8 years have been spent responding to briefs set by our clients and partners, supporting targeted work across the region. While we want to continue this work, we think it's time that we complement it by trying something a bit different. That's where Capacity Fundamentals comes in.

We recognise that we're in a privileged position to bring together people and organisations from across sectors, finding ways to support them to work together to solve problems and overcome challenges. So, we've accessed funding from a core group of grant funders to explore how we can harness this unique position, getting more intentional about how we listen to public and third sector leaders. We're thinking about how we bring together leaders and doers from across the region, connecting with people who want to create the conditions for change and transform insights into action.

And they're just the headlines

Want to know more about the change we're making, what we've been working on and what we've learned along the way? Make a cuppa and enjoy the read.

Hang on a tick, who are Capacity?

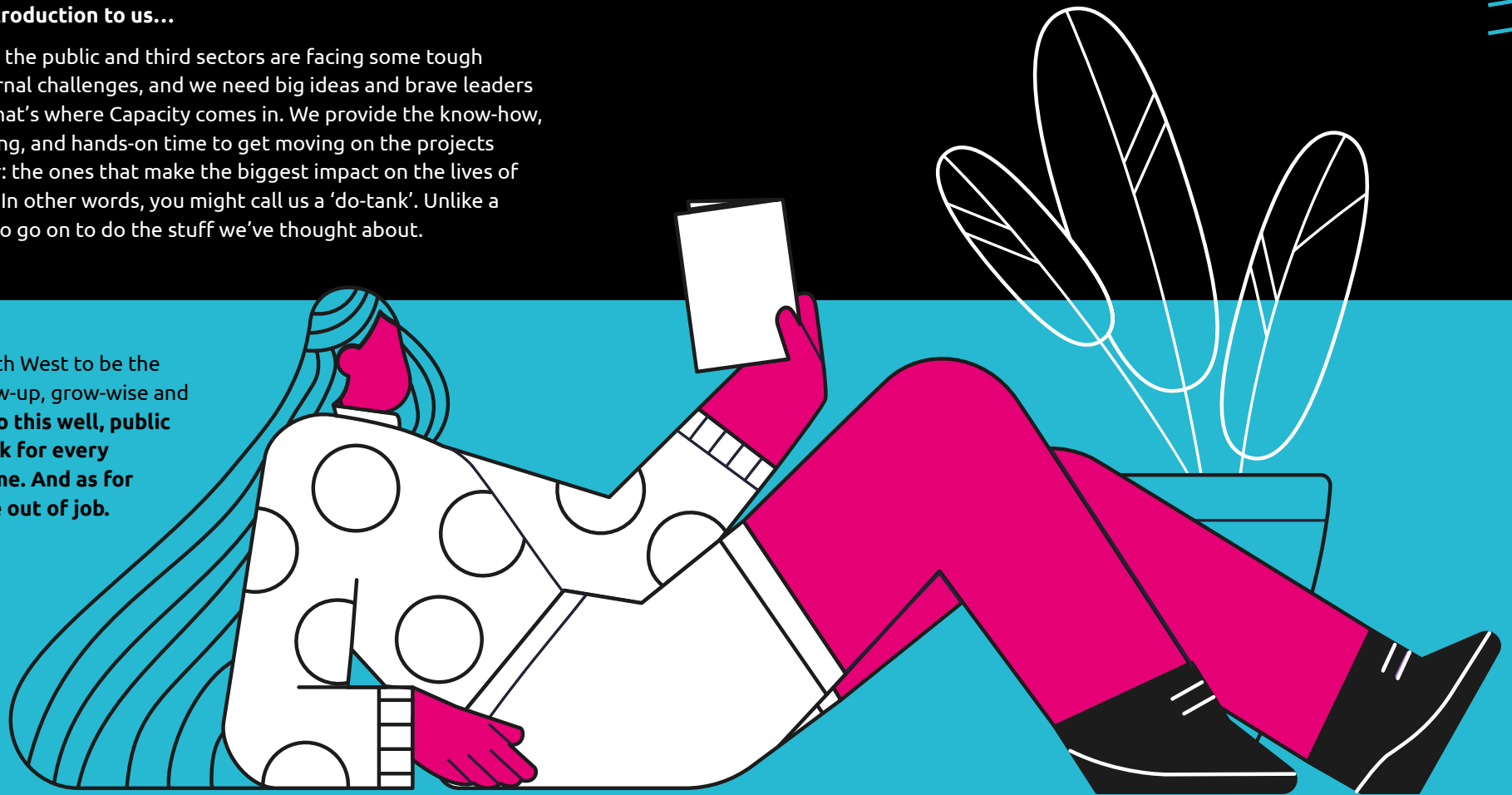
CAPACITY

**Making Public Services
People Services**

So, before we start, you probably want to know who Capacity are, so here's a quick introduction to us...

It's no secret that the public and third sectors are facing some tough internal and external challenges, and we need big ideas and brave leaders to tackle them. That's where Capacity comes in. We provide the know-how, big-picture thinking, and hands-on time to get moving on the projects that really matter: the ones that make the biggest impact on the lives of everyday people. In other words, you might call us a 'do-tank'. Unlike a think-tank, we also go on to do the stuff we've thought about.

We want the North West to be the best place to grow-up, grow-wise and grow-old. **If we do this well, public services will work for every person, every time. And as for us? Well, we'll be out of job.**



THE CHANGE WE'RE MAKING





Creating the conditions for fundamental change

For some time, we've been reflecting on what Capacity can do to help our public and third sector partners make public services people services - to do things differently and most importantly, more effectively. Our first 8 years have been spent working on many of these problems, responding to briefs that have already been decided and funding pots that sit in isolation. Now, we're trying something different...

Introducing, Capacity Fundamentals

We want to work with a range of partner organisations and use shared, in-depth understanding of local people's experiences and ideas to drive fundamental change in the system itself. We've set out to find partners that have the same enthusiasm we do, people and organisations who want to find ways through these barriers and who are keen to do things differently.

In Autumn 2023, we spent time listening to public and third sector leaders across Cheshire and the Liverpool City Region to learn about the biggest challenges they face. Based on these conversations, we were able to go away and piece together what we heard, creating our Capacity Fundamentals framework. This framework outlines the 8 key areas we'll be considering when working with partners to bring about the conditions for change in our region's public services.



What's next?

To tip this thinking into action, we want to find the people and places that want to take action to deliver this change. Over the next 12 months, we'll be hosting a series of events bringing together leaders and doers from across the Liverpool City Region and Cheshire to think about the barriers to change and how we can work collaboratively to overcome them.

We got stuff done

18,539 hours of staff time
invested in projects

31 organisations
supported

55 projects
worked on

1,559 people engaged
with to inform our work



We're not just about delivering great work for our clients; we also want to make sure that our staff think Capacity is a great place to work. That's why we take regular opportunities to ask our team to share their thoughts about how we do things. Here's what they told us.

100% said that **Capacity is a great place to work**

92%
said that they are
**proud to work for
Capacity**

95%
said that our teams
collaborate well to get
the job done

97%
said that Capacity allows
them to **make a positive
difference**

92%
said they **can access the
learning and training** they
need to do their jobs well

98%
said that **employee
wellbeing is a priority**

93%
said they staff **find their
work meaningful**

Spotlight on staff

Our impact in numbers

What our clients and partners said about our work:

100%

said they are able to **increase their impact** on people's lives

80%

said they are able to **find space to be proactive**, not just reactive

100%

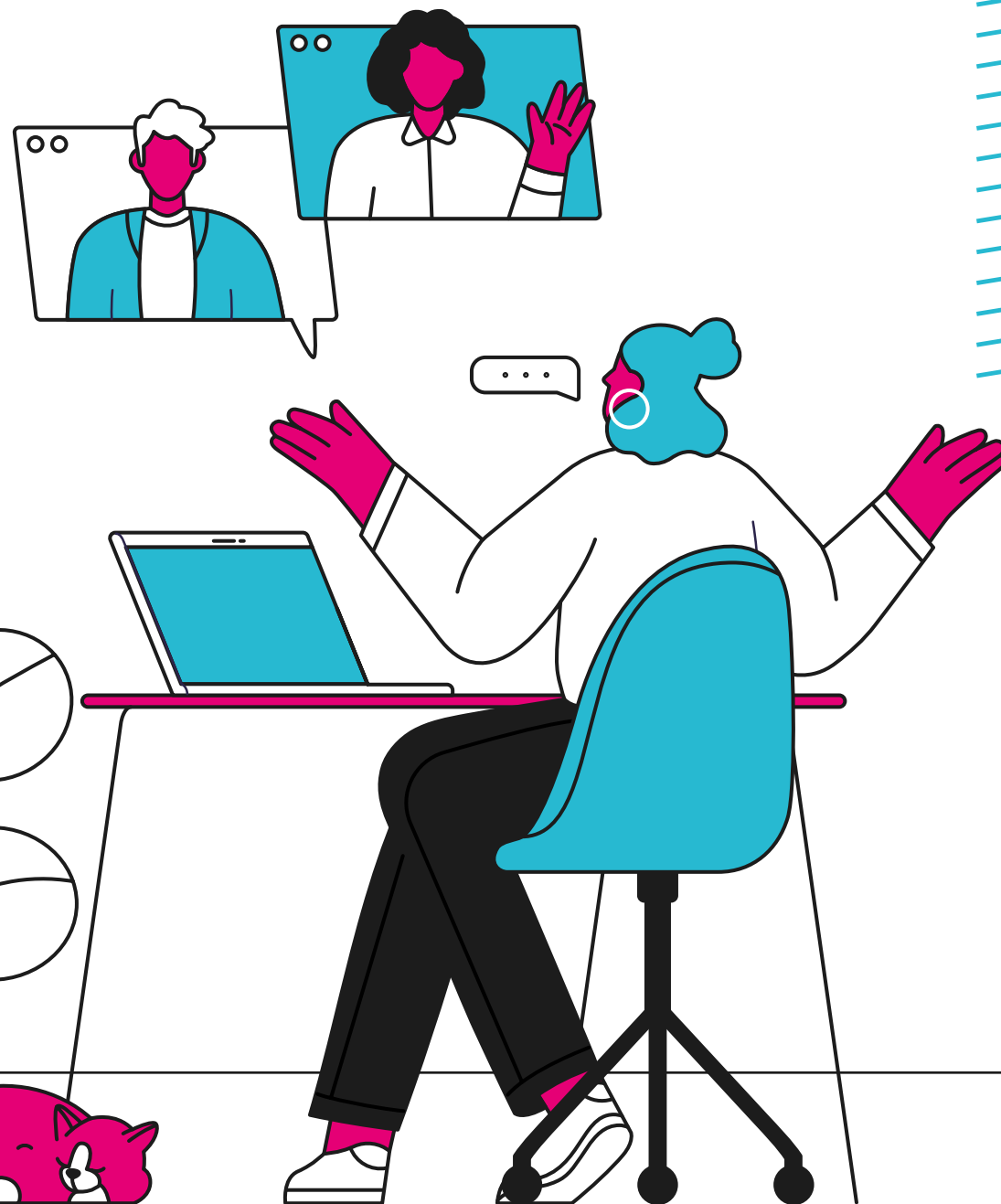
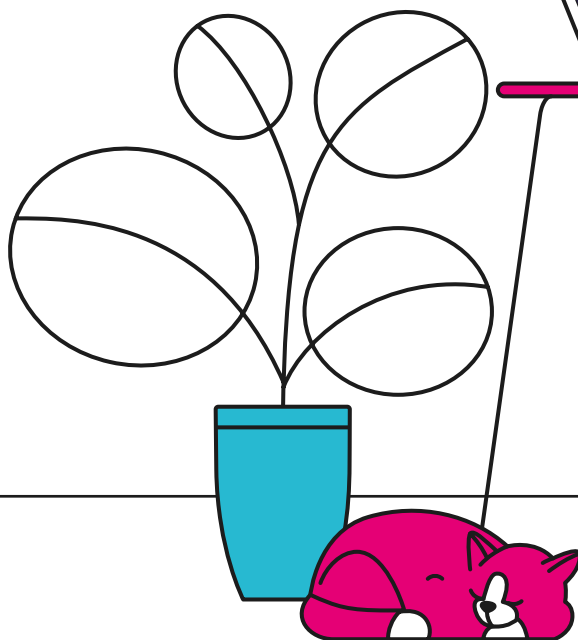
said they are **better equipped** to explore disruptive solutions

75%

said they are **better connected**

75%

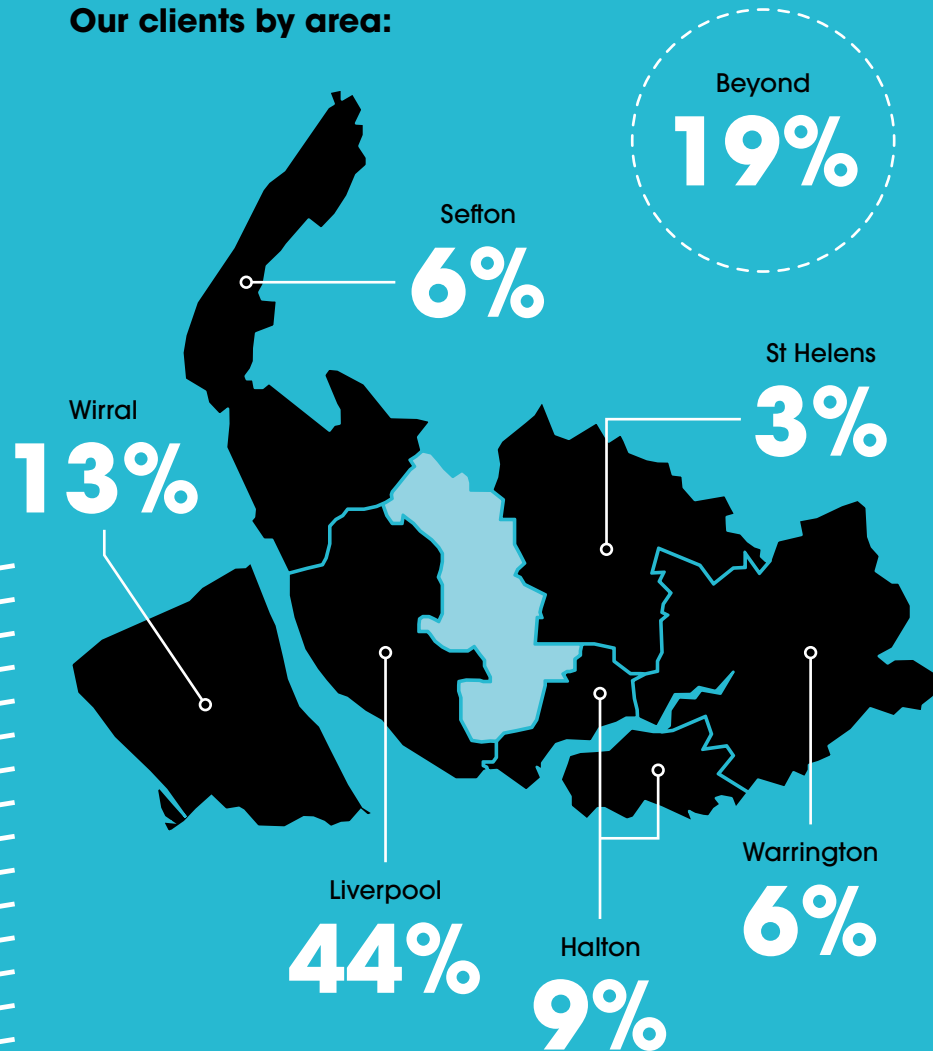
said that they are better able to **listen to people who use their services** and tailor them accordingly



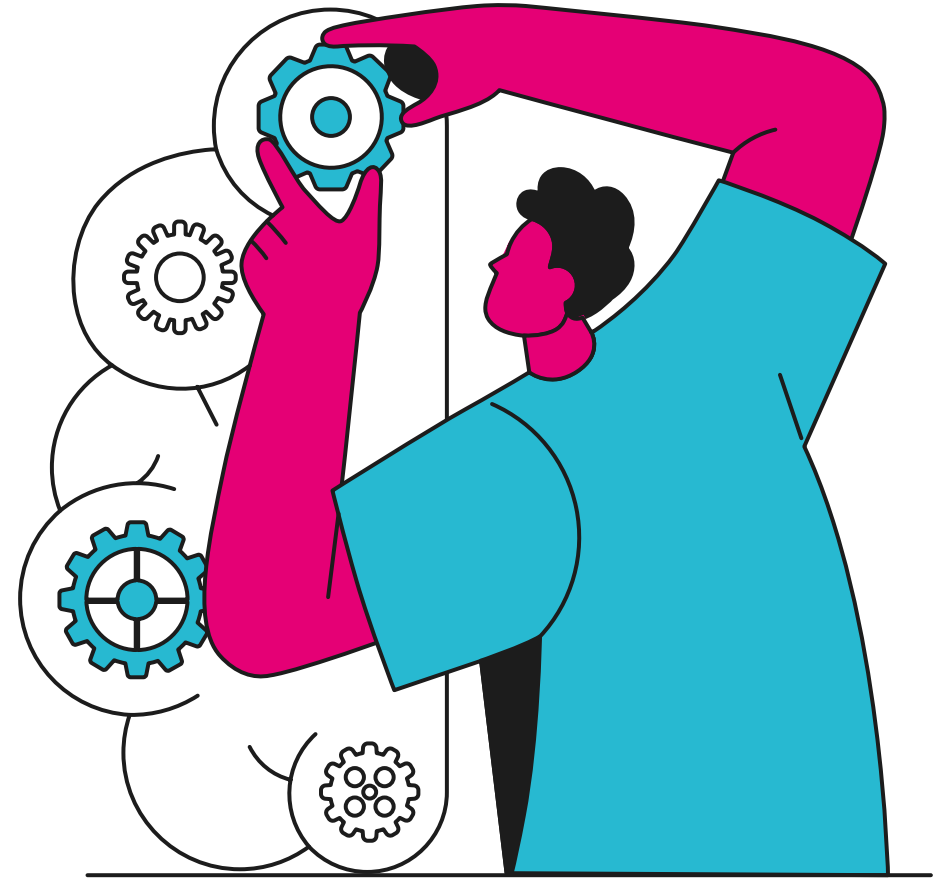
Connecting with organisations

across the North West (and beyond)

Our clients by area:



Our projects by focus area:



38%
Adult Services

26%
Healthcare

21%
Mental Wellbeing

7%
Early Help

4%
Ventures

4%
Fundamentals

Crikey, that was a busy year, wasn't it?

Throughout last year we ran and completed a whopping 55 projects alongside our incredible public and third sector partners. While we'd love to tell you about everything we worked on, we just don't have time (and we're sure you don't either)! Instead, we wanted to shine a spotlight on some of our favourite stories from last year, reflecting on the problems we faced, how we solved them and how we worked with our partners to make public services people services.



**With that in mind,
let's get into it...**

Part two:

DESIGN FOR LIFE

**Supporting our partners
to effectively design services**



Creating a place where 'Joy' lives

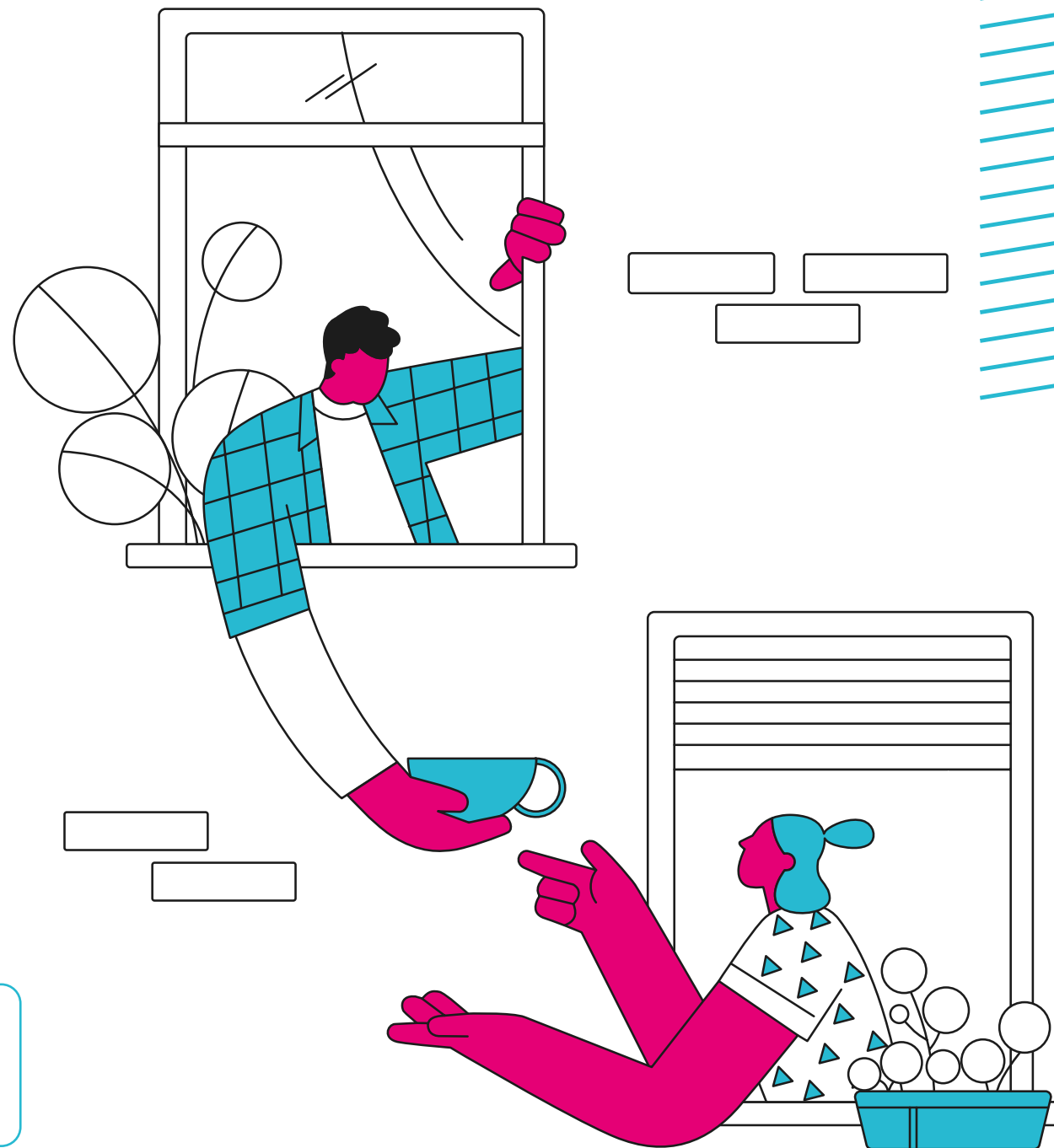
Capacity are no strangers to working with Open Door Charity, in fact we've worked together on lots of stuff in recent years. Back in 2022, Open Door approached Capacity for our help to deliver an ambitious project, to create a thriving hub for arts, culture, health and wellbeing for Wirral residents called 'Joy'.

Capacity spent time working closely with Open Door to develop a full business case for 'Joy', informed by the voices of the local community. We spent time researching, listening to the community and gathering insight. As a result, Open Door managed secure over £3.8 million in capital funding to renovate the Treasury Annexe Building in Birkenhead into this exciting new project.

Making 'Joy' a reality

We continued our work with Open Door to bring the project to life. Moving into the planning and design phase of a big project like this is always tough. No matter how well you plan, unexpected challenges and barriers are bound to pop up. Given our experience and service design know-how, Capacity were able to support Open Door to move through the uncertainty and pin down the finer details required to make their vision a reality.

Building on our engagement with local people, we spent time listening to partners and tenants to get to grips with what they needed from 'Joy'. These conversations gave us insight into the practical details of how it will operate.





Capacity have been alongside Open Door throughout 5 years of significant growth. Their flexible, versatile and high-quality support has provided expert knowledge and organisational resilience through times of change.

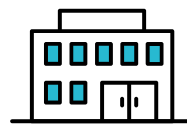
This is only set to grow in the coming years, as we create, then inhabit a progressive and ambitious new home - Joy. We are keen to strengthen our relationship further to ensure we embark on this next phase from a position of strength, which Capacity can help us to achieve.

Lee Pennington, Chief Executive, Open Door Charity

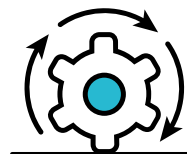


What we did

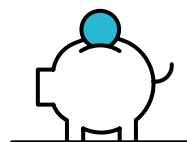
Throughout 2023 we worked with Open Door to design and understand the give and take between:



The operating model - getting into the nitty-gritty of how Joy will deliver services, what partners will be involved, how spaces will be used and how the building will operate.



The services model - giving a more detailed view of the services that will be provided, what they 'feel like' and what success looks like.



The costing model - thinking through different scenarios and the realities of delivering the Operating and Services models.

What's next?

Our work with Open Door doesn't end here. With a clear plan in place for how 'Joy' will operate, we're looking forward to getting our hands dirty in the next phase of the project - the renovation and physical construction that makes the dream a reality.

Branch: Transforming emotional health and wellbeing in the Wirral

A bit of background

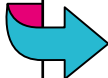
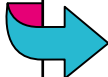
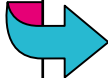

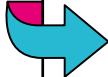
Across the UK, the number of children and young people seeking support for their emotional health is rising. At the end of November 2023, almost 450,000 children and young people were in contact with children and young people's mental health services (NHS Digital). This picture of growing demand is no different in the Wirral, where stretched services, tight thresholds and long waiting lists can make it difficult for those who need support to get the help they need, when they need it.

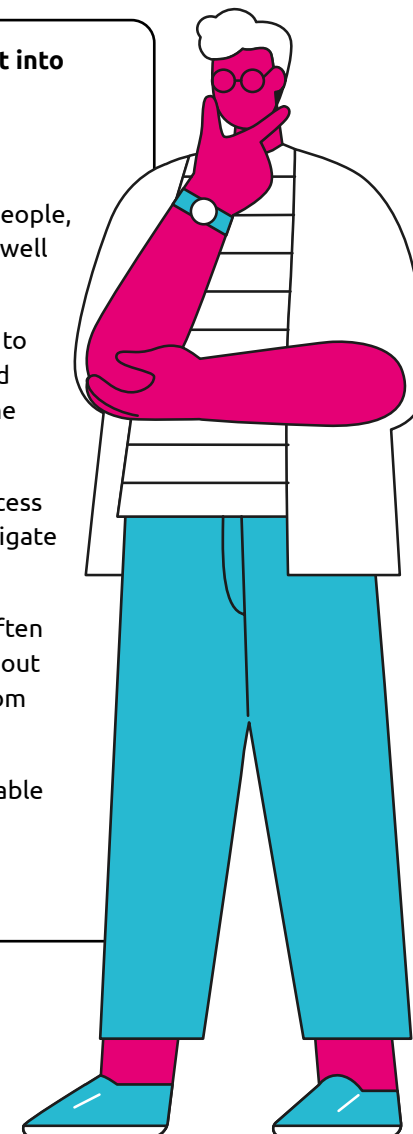
It's against this backdrop that Wirral MBC and the Cheshire and Merseyside ICB approached Capacity in early 2022. The partners wanted our help to lead a project to transform the landscape of children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing in the Wirral.

What we heard

We know that the only way to really get to grips with a problem is to listen closely to the experiences of those affected by it. With this in mind, we spent time engaging with children and young people, families and professionals from across Wirral.

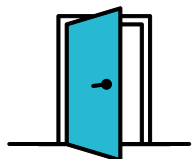
These conversations gave us insight into key themes:

-  There are a number of brilliant organisations providing support services for children and young people, but the offer across Wirral is not well coordinated.
-  People don't always know where to go for resources and support, and professionals can be unsure of the best service to signpost them to.
-  There are long waiting lists to access support and it can be hard to navigate the varying referral pathways.
-  Children and young people are often referred to support services without exploring self-help or support from existing networks first.
-  There are limited resources available to support children and families to manage emotional health and wellbeing themselves.



What we did

Our conversations with local people highlighted the need for an overhaul of Wirral's emotional health and wellbeing offer for children and young people. So, throughout 2023 we provided hands-on support to the Council and ICB to:



Design and build a digital 'central point of access' tool:

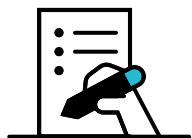
In September 2023, we commissioned Liverpool-based digital design agency Kaleidoscope to help us build and design a 'central point of access' tool. This tool will act as a digital front door for all emotional health and wellbeing resources and support services available to children and young people in the Wirral.



Design a new commissioning approach for emotional health and wellbeing services in the Wirral:

We've supported commissioners to put relationships, trust and shared purpose at the heart of this project, supporting them to bring together organisations through an 'Alliance'. This collaborative approach puts the right people around the table creating a mix of expertise and perspectives.

Local organisations were invited to tender to be part of the new alliance approach and in December 2023, the tender was awarded to 5 organisations: Open Door, Action for Children, Koala NW, Kooth and Utopia.



Design a governance plan for the Alliance:

This plan will support the Alliance through clear and effective governance processes. These processes define how the Alliance will be structured, led, managed and the roles and responsibilities of each of its members.

What's next?

So, that's the story so far. Transformation projects like these aren't delivered overnight. There's a lot more work to keep us busy throughout 2024. We'll be spending time:



Launching the Alliance



Fine-tuning our comms plan based on feedback from local children and young people, then putting it into action





Testing, tweaking and launching the digital tool

What difference will it all make?



With Capacity's support, the Council and ICB will put the power into the hands of local children and young people, supporting those across the Wirral to look after their wellbeing and know where to go for help and extra support if and when they need it.

While the project is still underway and the wider impact of our work is yet to be felt, we've identified some longer-term signs of what success will look like.



Children, young people and their families:

-  Will understand what good emotional health looks like and how to improve it.
-  Will be able to access the resources and help they need when they need it.

Trusted adults and professionals:

-  Will know how to find help for children and young people.
-  Will know where to signpost children, young people and families who need support.

Providers and commissioners:

-  Will have a shared vision, values and purpose for young people's emotional health.
-  Will be able to share data to improve how local children and young people's emotional health services are delivered.



As a complex project with multiple workstreams in a highly pressured area, Capacity have succeeded in providing the structure around, and the drive behind, moving the project forward.

We are hopeful this will make a significant difference to how children and young people's mental wellbeing services are accessed and delivered in the Wirral.

Darren Birks, Senior Partnerships & Transformation Manager for Mental Health, Wirral Place



Infoline: Designing remote mental health support by experience

A bit of background

In 2023, we were asked to complete our first piece of work with national charity, Mind. Their team wanted our support to gather insight into their information phone service, Infoline. Like many services designed to support mental health and wellbeing, demand for Infoline had rocketed since the start of the pandemic and the team could feel a shift in the 'ask' from both the public and professionals. Rather than approaching Mind for practical information and guidance, people are increasingly seeking emotional support and a listening ear.

Mind asked Capacity for support to gather insight around 4 key themes:



1. The service was originally designed for people over 18, but had recently extended its focus to include under 18s - was Infoline ready to meet these needs?



2. How was increasing demand for support impacting the Infoline team and staff morale?



3. Calls seeking professional advice from individuals responsible for providing support were increasing - how fit for purpose was Mind to meet this demand?



4. Where did Infoline fit into the wider UK-wide phone and digital support service offer - where was there duplication and where were there gaps?

What we heard

To grasp a problem, we need to understand how it is experienced by everyday people. So, over several months we spoke to over 350 people, hearing experiences from across the country. These conversations gave us a picture of current demand at a national and local level.

We complemented this insight with a detailed market analysis of similar services, talking to many other mental health providers and strategic partners, checking our findings and joining up our thinking.

Through these conversations, we found that:

- ✓ People wanted more clarity around Infoline's purpose and offer.
- ✓ People wanted different types of support, more than just information and advice.
- ✓ People wanted support across a range of platforms and from a range of organisations.



What we did

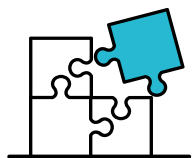
We shared our findings with Mind, distilling what we heard into a report that gave some core recommendations for next steps. We outlined two approaches Mind could take to responding to the shift in Infoline's 'ask'.

Based on our recommendations, the team at Mind decided to develop a more intentional approach to support a wider audience by the expansion of emotional support through a suite of remote tools, including phone support.

Within 3 months of the project completion, Mind:



Expanded the call handler team



Brought existing skills into the team



Provided enhanced training to existing handlers



Began the process of repositioning the service to include a 'listening' offer

“

The team at Capacity have such a similar outlook to our own, they want to truly listen and understand the challenge they're working on, but they also want to get things done... The recommendations have been critical in helping us build a solid business case to take the next step with Infoline.

Stephen Buckley, Senior Development Manager, Mind

”

Our learning across our design projects

As a learning organisation, we think it's really important to regularly take a step back and reflect not just on our successes, but our failures and the challenges we encounter along the way. So, what did we learn about project delivery in 2023?



1. It's all about people
 Never underestimate the power of relationships. Great relationships don't just happen. It takes time and effort to build trust, mutual understanding and great communication (the foundations of any successful partnership).
We're giving extra time to cement our relationships with new clients. After all, the quality of these relationships can make or break a project.

2. You need to be a master plate-spinner
 It can be tough to keep track of all the different strands of a project. Many of the projects we work on are made up of lots of different (and complex) elements. In these projects, it can be hard to keep all the plates spinning at the same time as keeping a handle on all the different stakeholders impacted both directly and indirectly.
We're finding better ways to capture and track project delivery against simple milestones that keep us focused among all the complexity and 'noise'.

3. Capture the 'hidden' work
 There is a lot of invisible work involved in project delivery. It's easy to underestimate the time and work required to deal with tasks that are often overlooked but are essential to the success of a project. From coaching stakeholders, to moving work through public service governance processes, a lot of effort can be put into these 'hidden' tasks.
We're getting better at understanding what work is 'invisible' to the project objectives and thinking about how we build this into future briefs, providing clients with a realistic idea of the work involved.

Part three:

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

**Place-based listening and
local leadership**



Round 'Ere: Understanding what wellbeing means in Widnes

A bit of background

'Wellbeing' has become a bit of a buzzword in public services, with data and information around wellbeing increasingly used by services, politicians and commissioners to make decisions about communities. The problem is, the metrics that are used to measure wellbeing are often designed by academics and policymakers. So, when we talk to communities about wellbeing, it can be hard to tell if we're all talking about the same thing.

In late 2022, our partners at The Civic Data Cooperative (CDC) approached Capacity to work together to get to the root of this problem. Over 10 months, CDC and Capacity set out to ask local people in Widnes 'what does wellbeing mean to you?', exploring more about the things we need to measure if we really want to know when people are 'well'.

What we did

The project, called Round 'Ere, was delivered in seven distinct phases:



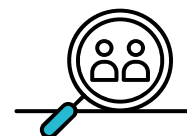
1. Planning and designing the project



2. Recruitment campaign



3. Training and onboarding



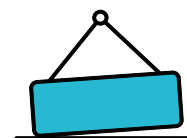
4. Community research



5. Distilling the insights



6. Exploring the role of a data hub



7. Closing the project

What we heard

Data-driven frameworks can provide headlines, but never the full story about what's happening at a community level. To get to grips with what wellbeing really means to people in Widnes, we needed to approach our work through the eyes of its residents. With this in mind, we adopted a participatory design approach to the work at hand.

We spent time recruiting, training and onboarding a team of 14 'Community Researchers', local people who could support us to facilitate conversations with residents and gather insights. Over 7 weeks between July and August 2023, our Community Researchers completed 207 interviews with people in Widnes about what wellbeing means to them.

People spoke about **personal wellbeing** and **community wellbeing**.

When people spoke about **personal wellbeing**, three topics came up frequently:



Emotional, mental and social wellbeing:
connecting with friends, family or other social groups.

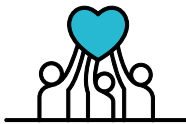


Physical health:
the ability to be active and lead a healthy lifestyle.



Spiritual health:
the freedom to express or practice faith, religion or spirituality.

We heard that **community wellbeing** relies on two factors:



People:
having a supportive community and a sense of community spirit.



Place:
people want to feel like they have a choice of things to do, see and visit.

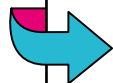
“

Mental wellbeing is hard to measure... It's going to be different for everyone and it's got to be more personalised.

”

Widnes resident





Design of the data commons

Part of CDCs wider ambition to shift power to communities on how their data is imagined, collected and used is to build a data commons. There was no opposition to the purpose of a data commons, but some residents didn't grasp the personal benefits. Despite this, the idea was met with intrigue and people were all ears to learn more. One thing that stood out from these conversations was the need to develop data skills and literacy alongside the build of the commons.

What's next?

Round 'Ere provides a tried and tested participatory design framework that can be applied to community research. CDC plan to expand this approach within and beyond Widnes, applying it to other sticky public sector problems to create space to truly listen to communities and to start to work to create real change in the Liverpool City Region.

Our work with CDC doesn't end here. Round 'Ere allowed us to develop a rich understanding of what wellbeing means to people in Widnes. We're currently working with CDC to explore how the insights generated can be used to improve decision making at a local level.

The next step for CDC is to build a digital platform that represents what Widnes residents think about wellbeing, forming part of their wider data commons project.



Working with Capacity helped us to make our ideas not only doable, but more relevant to those responsible for decision-making. Capacity has added immense value in bringing local policy and health partners to the table and provided expertise in creative and innovative community projects.



Dr Emily Rempel, Public Participation Manager, CDC

Poets Streets: Breaking the cycle of deep-rooted disadvantage on a small housing estate

A bit of background

Linacre is a ward within the borough of Sefton in North West England. Within Linacre sits Poets, a group of streets named after famous wordsmiths, an area where 2,200 people live (33% of the total ward population) and where the highest rates of fuel poverty, worklessness and crime in the borough are recorded.

For several years, five registered providers (Crosby Housing Association, One Vision Housing, Plus Dane, Prima Group and Riverside) have been working with Sefton Borough Council to improve the housing offer, local environment and quality of life for people in the Poets Streets and the wider Linacre area.

The providers agreed that they want to continue this collaboration, focusing on 'people and place', public service reform and prevention, developing a modern and collective approach to neighbourhood regeneration. To do this well, they wanted to bring together agencies and residents to understand local people's experience to drive change locally. That's where Capacity enters the scene.

In April 2023, Capacity was commissioned to work with the group of providers and Sefton Council to:



What we heard

Like any good project, we started by undertaking some desktop research. We spent time looking at existing data from the registered providers, Sefton Council and national data sets, trying to paint a picture of what life in Poets was like.

Building on insight from our desktop research, in May 2023 we set about deepening our understanding of the area's strengths and challenges. We spoke to 29 people from 14 local community groups, housing associations, public sector bodies and health teams. Professional insights and data gave us an idea of what key challenges in the area were, but this perspective was too narrow to provide the full picture.

We needed to engage directly with residents of the Poets Streets to try to understand 'how is life in Poets'. We wanted to know what's really going on for local people and what life feels like behind the statistics. In July and August 2023, we spoke to over 40 residents from the Poets Streets area and 55 children and young people.

Based on data and our conversations with people living and working in the area, we were able to identify some key themes.



Fly tipping, bins and rats

A build-up of rubbish on the streets, in alleyways and green spaces is significantly impacting the health and wellbeing of residents. The rubbish build up is a real issue and the area is overrun with rats as a result.



Community assets

Family venues and green spaces in the area are used poorly and underdeveloped.



Housing quality

People reported issues with damp and mould. Some older houses have issues with insulation, which exacerbates these issues. Low energy efficiency makes it difficult to keep homes warm.



Unemployment

Nearly half of the residents of Poets Streets are unemployed. Many residents have rent arrears and are struggling with debt.



Cost of living

The rising cost of living is a significant issue for people living in the area. Even those in employment expressed frustration about accessing benefits to help them get by.



Lack of trust

Residents did not feel like their basic fundamentals are supported. They told us it felt like there was no point in reporting local issues because they did not feel like they would be addressed.

We also heard loud and clear that **residents need to be at the heart of thinking and doing to make any long-term difference.**



**We need a cultural shift...
and we would need the residents
to design the solution so that
we know they would use it.**

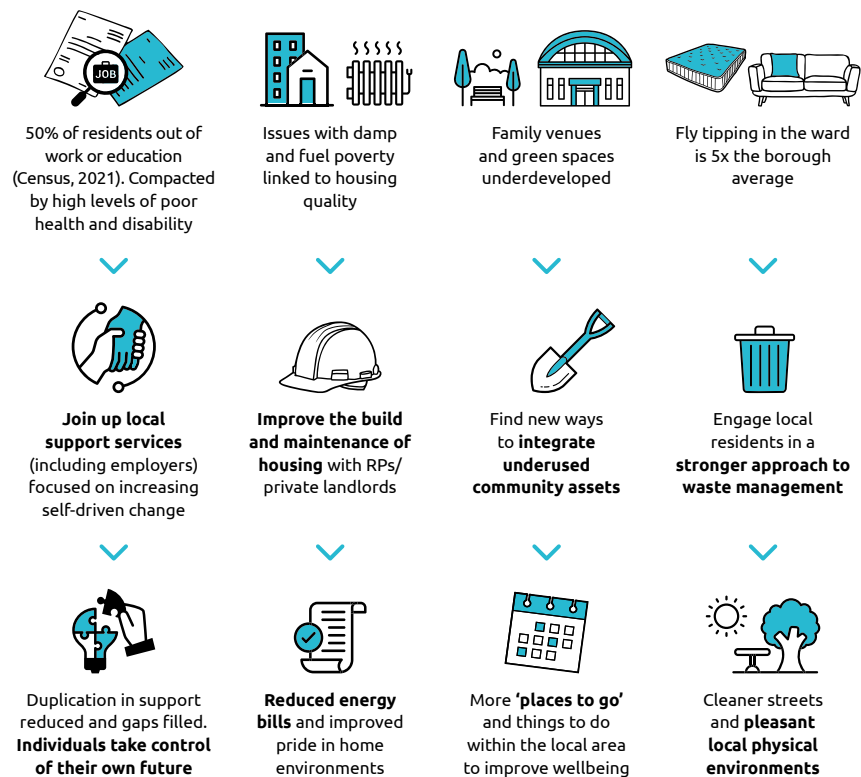
Christine Leung, Taking Root in Bootle



What we did

This was a relatively short project with a small window of six to nine months to focus on a small number of key issues. Informed by community conversations, we developed a set of realistic and achievable actions that we shared with the registered providers and Sefton Council.

Proposed areas for action that could create immediate change:




Better health and wellbeing



Balancing household budgets



Stronger sense of community



Improved local pride of place

We strongly believe that through stronger relationships and breaking down the red tape, we will create the conditions for local collaboration with our public sector partners and establish this as a central approach to improving outcomes for the people of Poets.

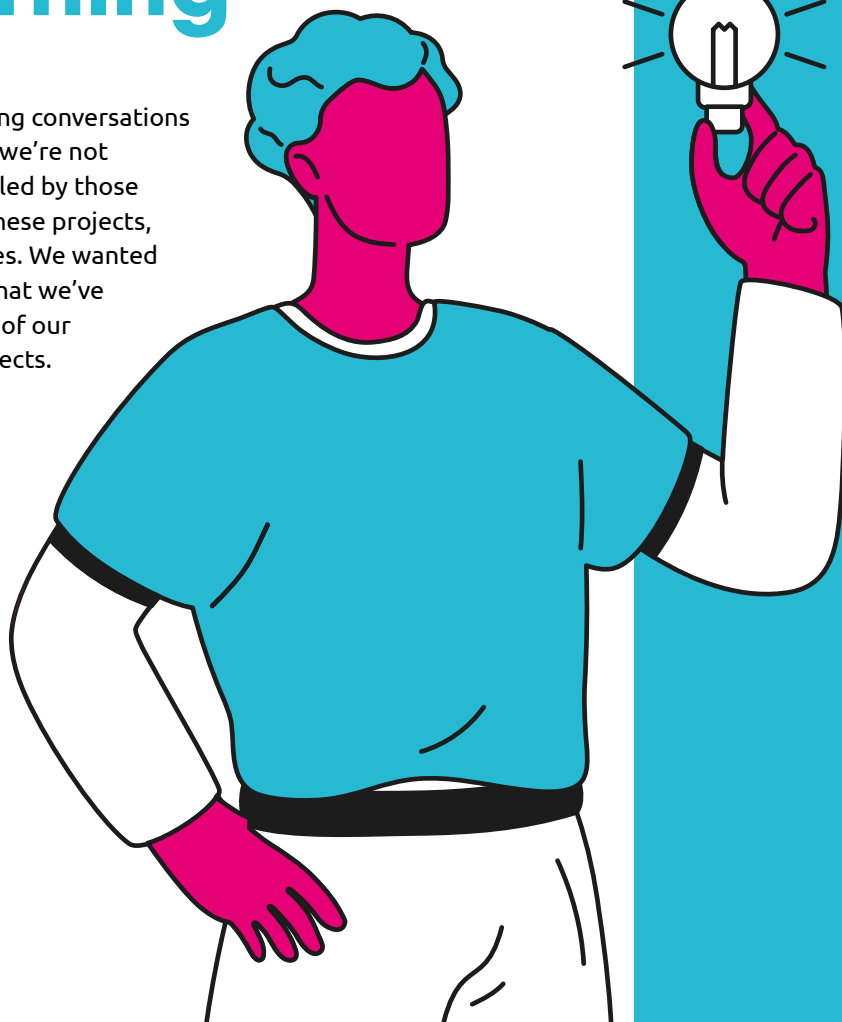


What's next?

Our work in Poets Streets isn't over yet, and we already have an action plan for our next steps. We're eager to carry on our work with the registered providers to create real change in the area. Any long-term commitment to change and regeneration will require funding to make things happen. With this in mind, we're working to secure collective funding to continue this work.

Putting community voice at the heart of local decision making: our learning

Our team is great at facilitating conversations and getting things done, but we're not experts in everything - we're led by those with real life experience; in these projects, residents of local communities. We wanted to take a moment to share what we've learned through the delivery of our community engagement projects.



1. We need to support communities to hold the power

Residents are key to driving fundamental change in their communities. Local people need to be at the heart of the thinking and doing needed to make any long-term difference.

We know that people want power to be shared in their communities, we're learning more about the ways we can harness this to drive local improvements.

2. Trust must be built through action

Action needs to be visible. Real change will only happen if agencies continue to work with local people to drive forward change. People must be able to see with their own eyes that their engagement leads to action.

We've developed our understanding around the importance of tight feedback loops; people need to be able to see the role they play in making change happen.

3. Real change doesn't happen overnight

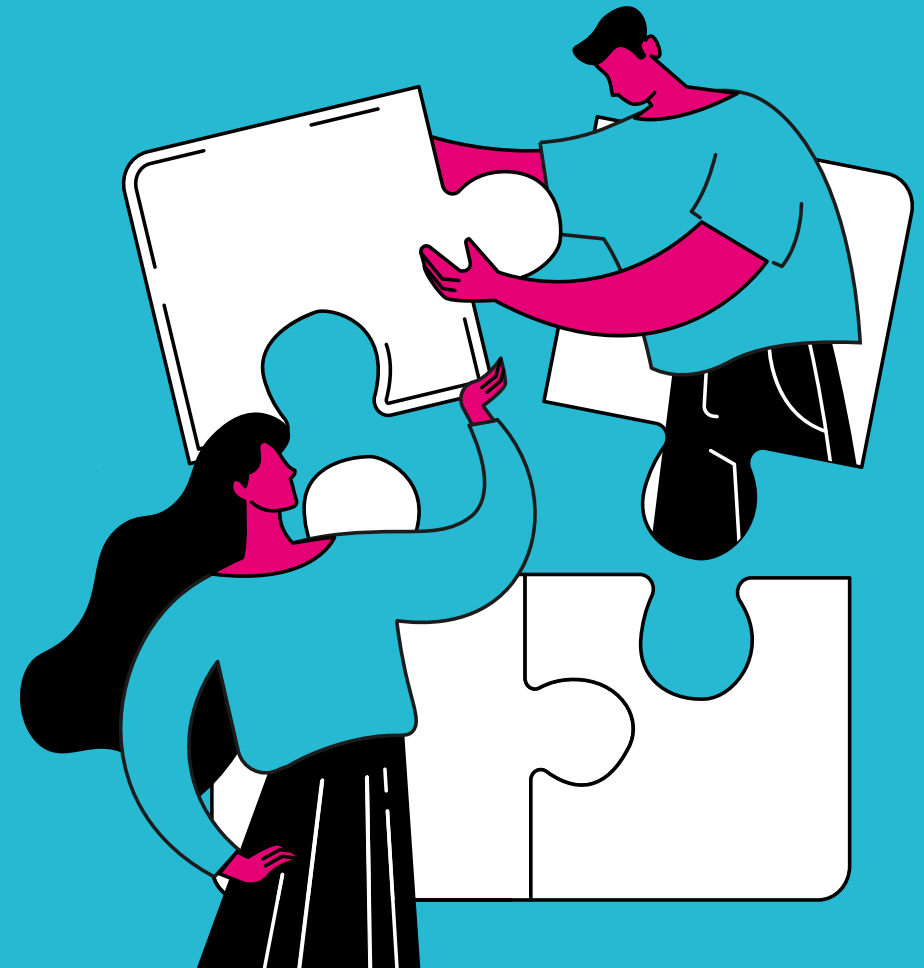
Long-term regeneration requires long-term commitment. Real change requires consistency and time. Listening to local people and understanding the challenges they face alone isn't enough. Local policy makers, organisations and agencies with the ability to drive change need to be bold with their commitment to regeneration over multiple years.

We're seeing that our community engagement projects are just a starting point on a journey towards driving fundamental change in communities and shifting power to local people.

Part four:

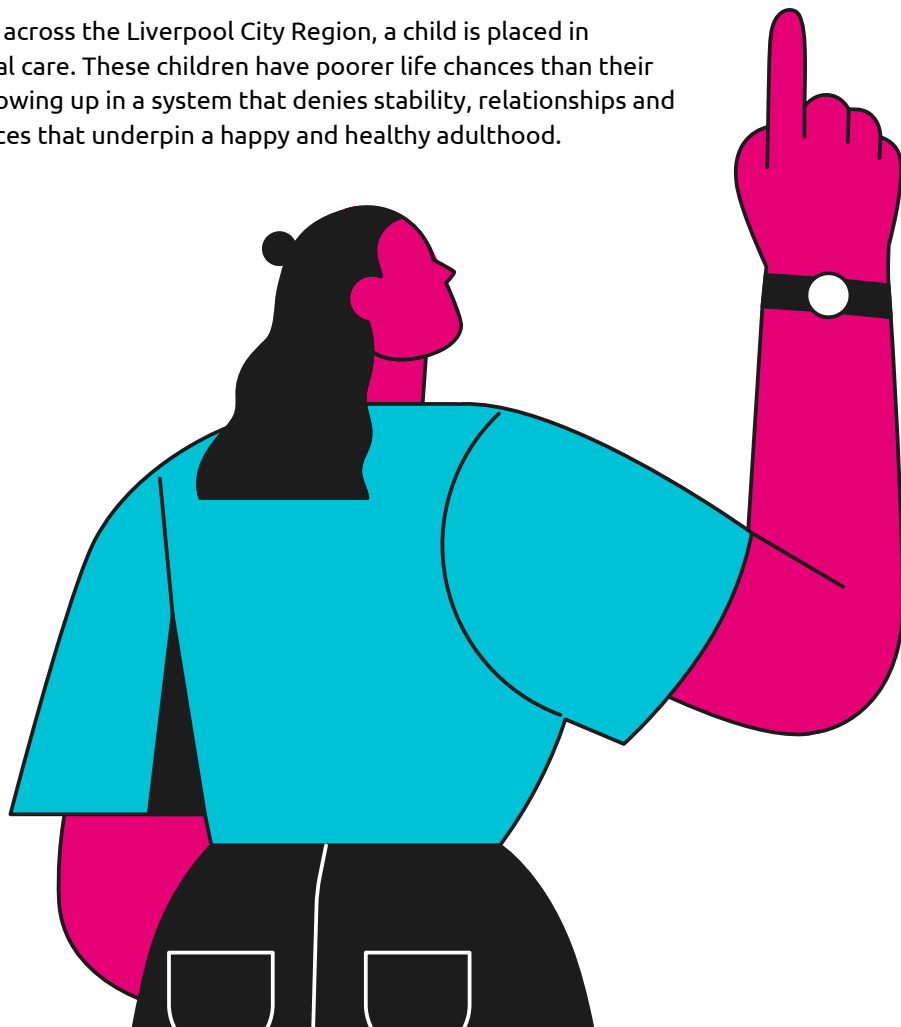
BUILDING NEW WAYS TO SOLVE OLD PROBLEMS

Encouraging leaps in progress



Juno: Changing children's residential care for good

Everyday across the Liverpool City Region, a child is placed in residential care. These children have poorer life chances than their peers, growing up in a system that denies stability, relationships and experiences that underpin a happy and healthy adulthood.



The landscape:



Between 2010-2020, an additional **15,000 children** in the UK were in care.



Within the LCR, **89% of children's homes** are operated by the private sector, and just **2%** by the voluntary sector.



Between 2016-2020, the Competition and Market Authority reported that private providers were recording profits **averaging 22.6%**.



Private residential providers have a greater percentage of 'inadequate' and 'requires improvement' children's homes.



9% of looked after children are growing up in residential homes, only one-third of these children live in the area where they grew up.

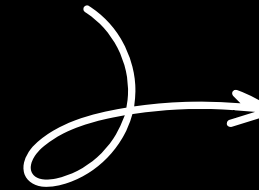
It's against this context that - back in 2019 - the Liverpool City Region Children's Commissioner's Group asked for our help. The group wanted our support to help design a new approach to children's residential care that could meet these significant local challenges. This work demonstrated a significant need for a new approach to children's residential care in the region, one that puts brilliant care, not profit, at its heart - that's where Juno comes in.

Juno - Capacity's first venture - started with an idea that things should, and could, be done differently for the benefit of young people. Juno is on a mission to create high quality, not-for-profit homes that transform opportunities for children growing up in the care system, homes where young people feel safe, loved and supported.



The journey so far

Between 2020 and 2022 we:



Undertook a detailed, co-produced Feasibility Study and Business Plan. These were done in close consultation with care-experienced young people in the LCR, and were followed by a detailed financial model and a full external legal review on the most appropriate governance model between staff, local authorities, and Capacity.

Incorporated & incubated a new social enterprise, We Are Juno CIC, appointed its Board of Directors, and established a working governance structure.

Gained approval from LCR Local Authorities to work in collaboration to implement the model, with monthly multi-agency Project Group Meetings.

Secured over £2.2m of start-up social investment and grants.

Developed a property partnership with local Housing Associations to buy, build or adapt existing properties and turn them into suitable homes.

Refurbished our first home, got a second home in the pipeline for refurbishment and opening in 2023, and good options for further homes in 2024 and beyond.

Got the Juno Young Leaders group up and running, including the appointment of a facilitator, a push across LCR for care experienced young adults to join the Group, a launch event in Liverpool, regular get-togethers and activities.

Launched the Juno CIC brand and started recruitment, completing recruitment for our Director of Care and Registered Manager.

So, what did we get up to in 2023?

Well, let's start by saying that 2023 was a big year for Juno. We not only opened our first home - Juno Oxton - but made strides towards opening a second - Juno Wallasey. It's safe to say that it's been a bumpy ride, and we faced some unexpected challenges along the way. Despite all the uncertainty, we've maintained our focus on:



Building strong teams

We spent a lot of time getting recruitment right, hiring a whole new staff team for Juno Oxton and reviewing and clarifying leadership roles and responsibilities. We designed a thorough induction process to help new staff get to grips with Juno's ethos and values and to support them to develop the skills they need to thrive. Alongside all this, we began to recruit some brilliant people to join the team at Juno Wallasey.



Building welcoming homes

We've had great feedback from people who've visited Juno Oxton and lots of comments on the quality of the environment and the nurturing atmosphere created by the team. This has set the standard for future homes - we will continue to build welcoming and safe properties that children are proud to call 'home'.



Listening to our Young Leaders

From very beginning, we've worked closely with Juno's 'Young Leaders', a group of care-experienced young people from across the Liverpool City Region and Cheshire. Their ideas, insights and experiences have underpinned Juno's service design and plans for the future. Working with our Young Leaders has helped us to make sure young people's voices remain at the centre of the way we do things.



Providing brilliant care

In May 2023, we faced a big setback when Juno Oxton didn't get the OFSTED rating we expected. The Juno team rose to the challenge, putting in some seriously hard work to get Juno to the place it needed to be.

The team quickly implemented an improvement plan that involved getting back to basics, reviewing and adapting policies, processes and practices to make sure they reflected the brilliant care at the heart of Juno's mission. This was an incredibly tough time, but what we learned along the way has been invaluable. Not only did it help us get Juno back on the right track, but it will shape the way we do things going forward.

What's next?

If you think 2023 sounded busy, wait until you hear our plans for 2024! We have high hopes for the next 12 months. We'll be:

- **Continuing to get better and better:** learning from our first year has been embedded in policy, process and practice and will hopefully be reflected in our Ofsted rating.
- **Opening our second home:** we plan to open Juno Oxton in spring, with a brilliant team in place to deliver brilliant care for more young people.
- **Purchasing a third home:** we have plans to purchase and refurbish a third home, with ambitions to open by the end of the year.
- **Continuing to recruit great staff:** we want to attract, recruit and retain great staff. To do this, we're working on building great team culture and will remain committed to the learning and development of our teams.
- **Securing more social investment:** we have ambitions to secure more social investment and grant funding to enable us to continue to our plans to open more Juno homes to provide brilliant care to more children.

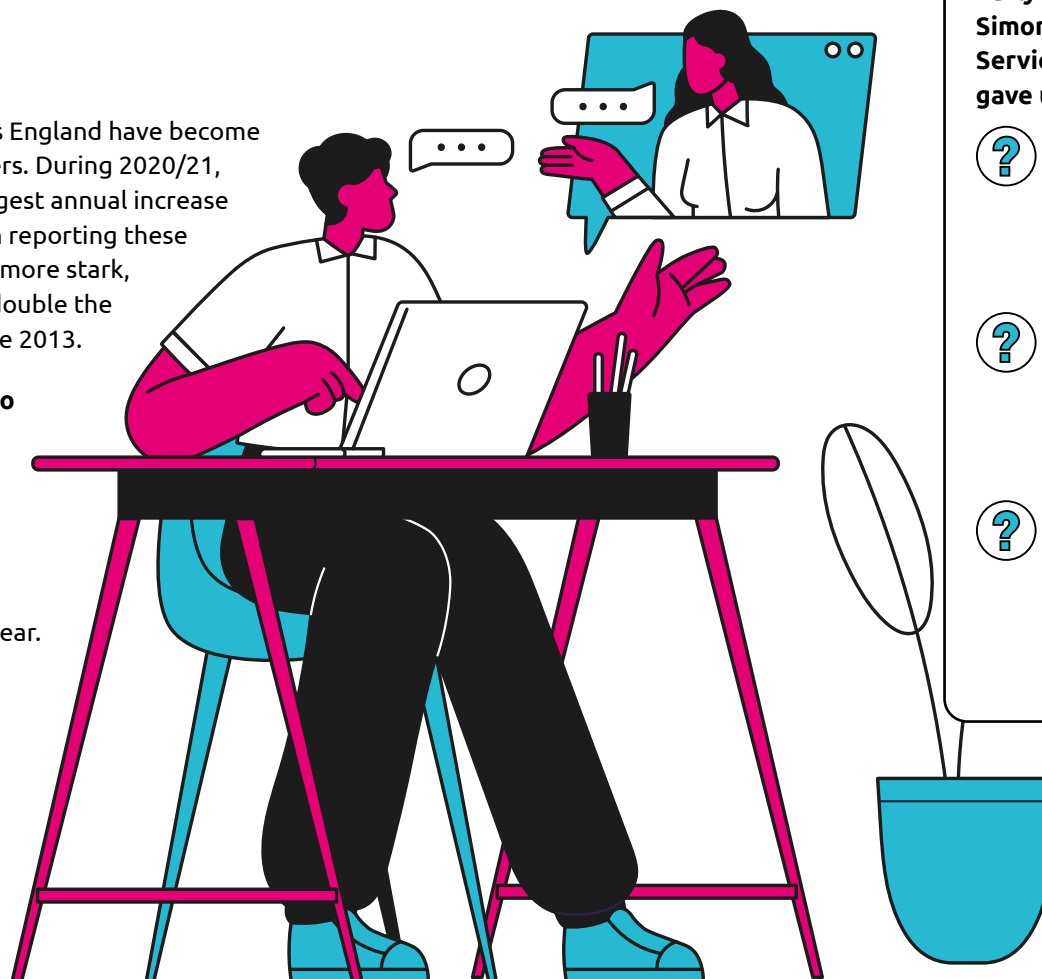
Yonder: Building a workforce that meets everyone's needs

A bit of background

Over recent years, Local Authorities across England have become increasingly reliant on agency social workers. During 2020/21, agency numbers increased by 13%, the largest annual increase since the Department for Education began reporting these figures in 2017. Locally the picture is even more stark, with increases in agency worker usage at double the national levels, a 62% vs 29% increase since 2013.

Reliance on agency workers presents two main challenges:

- 1. Financial challenges:** the additional cost of employing agency staff is approximately £26,000 per full-time worker per year, equalling over £1 million a year.
- 2. Quality challenges:** the quality of temporary staff varies considerably. Newly qualified social workers are often used without any experience or development opportunities. This leads to high turnover and a lack of stability for children and families.



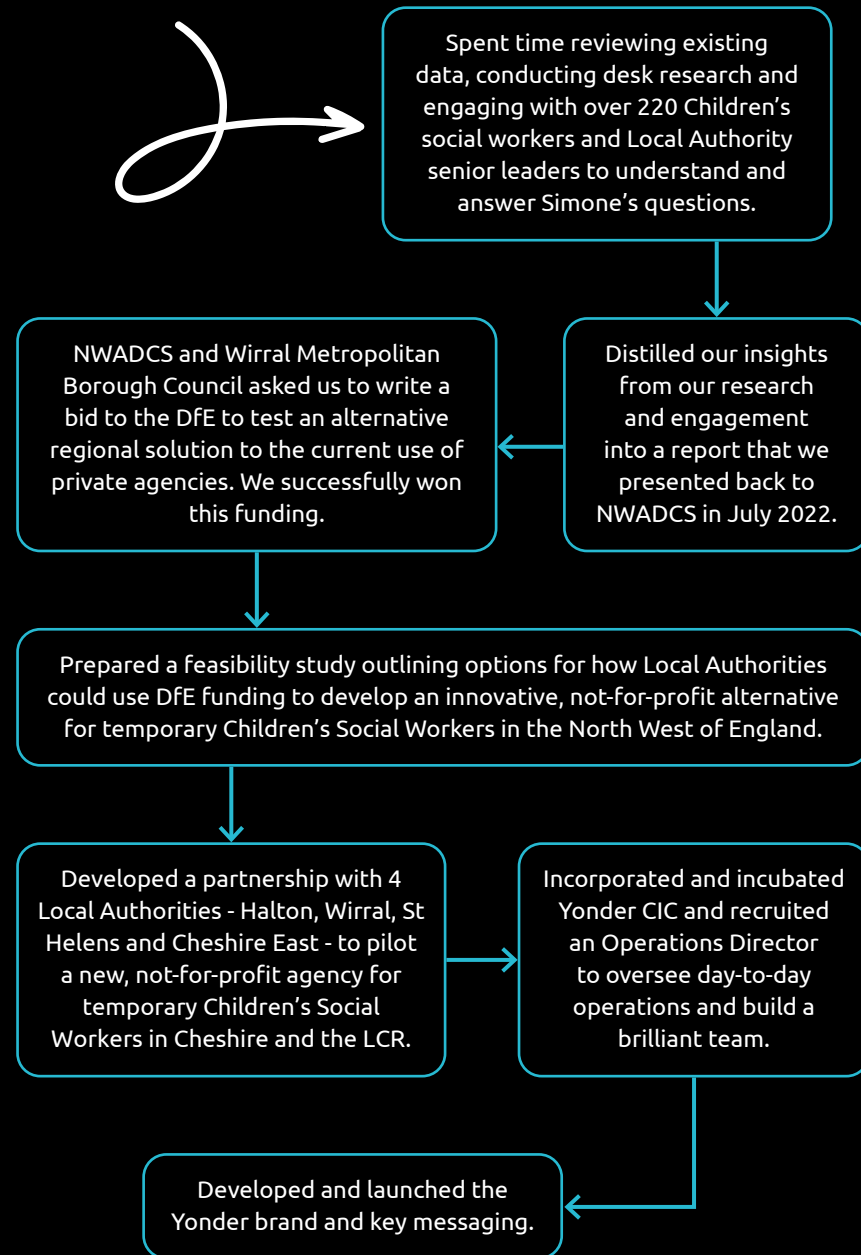
Back in 2021, Capacity was commissioned by the North West Association for Directors of Children's Services (NWADCS) to deliver a 'Reimagining Children's Social Care Workforce' project. NWADCS wanted our support to explore different ways that Local Authorities can address the considerable challenges they face recruiting and retaining high-quality, permanent social workers in the region.

Early on in the project we met with **Simone White (Director of Children's Services for Wirral MBC)** Simone gave us the challenge to think about:

- ? How can we create a permanent Local Authority workforce of engaged and effective social workers who support children and families to thrive?
- ? Is there a role for a Local Authority backed, not-for-profit alternative that gives Local Authorities more control in terms of quality and cost?
- ? How could alternative models compete with the flexibility, benefits, and variety that agencies can offer individuals in the sector?

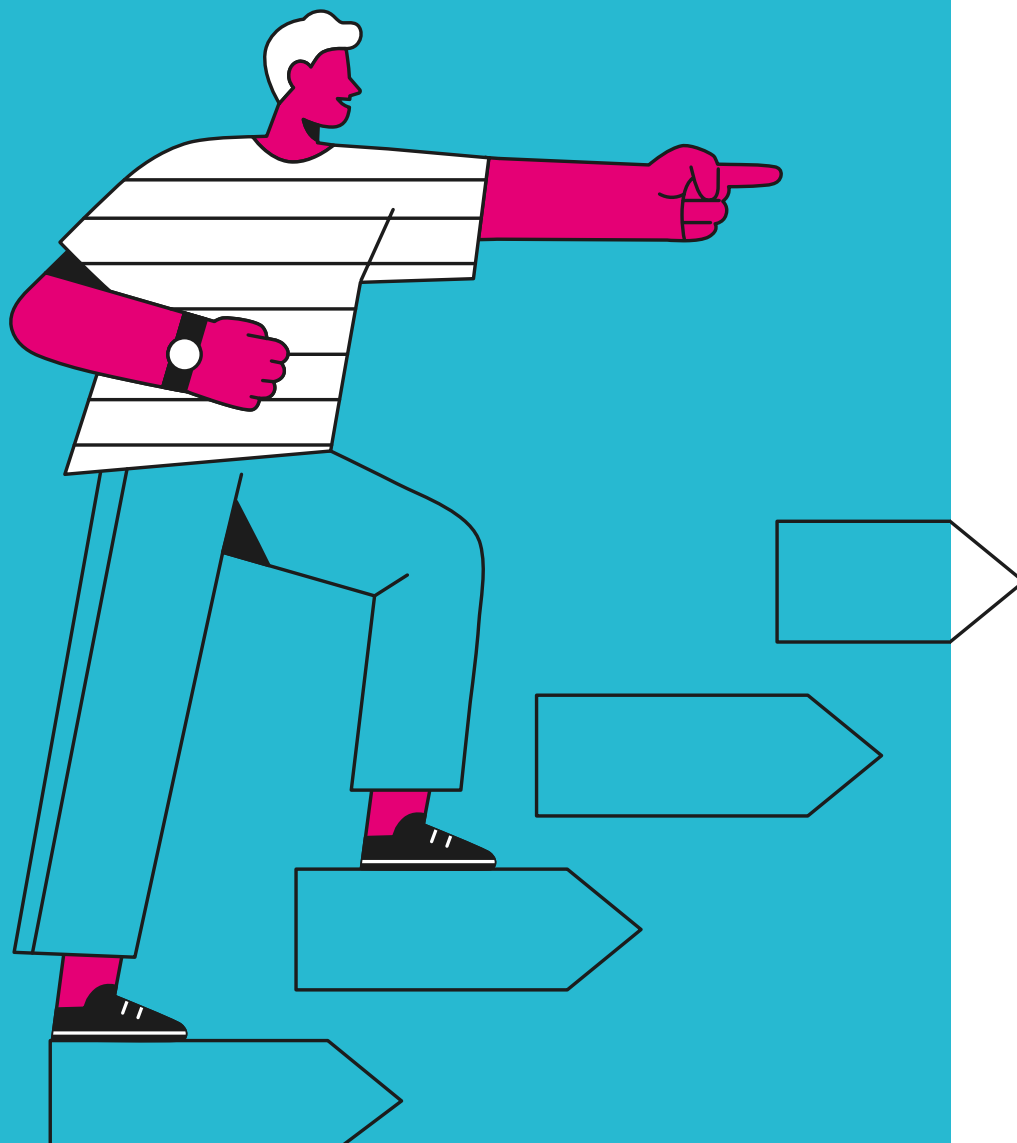
The journey so far

During 2022 and 2023 we:






Enter stage right... Yonder

This new venture is part of a shared ambition with national policy makers to look at the big picture and to take action to reduce Local Authority reliance on temporary social workers. We want to build a balance between temporary and permanent colleagues where both feel valued and invested in, changing the face of agency working and making sure that temporary workers feel part of the core Local Authority teams they're working with.



So, how will we do it?

We'll use public money to change lives: We'll ensure that every penny spent goes towards maximising the personal development, satisfaction and dreams of those living and working the North West by:

-  Creating a surplus that can be invested into the system.
-  Encouraging temporary staff to move back into permanent roles.
-  Reducing the cost and profiteering of private recruitment agencies, whilst keeping salaries equitable.



We'll work together across the region: We'll create a culture of shared learning and collaboration with the Local Authorities involved, supporting long-term change through shared agreements to invest in practice development, good culture, and pay rate harmony.



We'll improve the quality of our teams: We'll match experienced people with the public sector roles that are right for them. We'll give them great tools, development opportunities and even better working environments; offering them a place where they can thrive alongside the people they support.

What's next?

2024 will be a big year for Yonder. We've got a lot planned, including finalising our delivery processes and systems, beginning to build our team of temporary Children's Social Workers, officially launching trading activity and placing out first Social Worker. There'll be a lot going on, so watch this space!

Venturing into the unknown: what we've learned from launching our start-ups



No matter how well you plan, it's risky business launching a new venture. We were able to do a lot of reflecting on the incubation and launch of Juno and incorporate this into the way we're doing things at Yonder. Here are some of our top tips based on what we've learned along the way:



Hold your nerve

When launching a venture, prepare for the impact of a bumpy start. No matter how well you plan, there are bound to be unexpected challenges that pop up. It's important to be ready to rise to these challenges.

We're learning that being flexible and prepared to adapt your ways of working and respond to unplanned changes is crucial.



Get the right people on board

Be prepared to put in a lot of time and effort to bring the right people on board. Whether it's the staff team, senior leadership, or external partners, having the right people at the table can make or break a venture. Be patient and take the time to get this right (and don't be afraid to make tweaks and changes along the way).

We're learning that you need a strong mix of people involved with the right skills, experience and passion to make things happen.



Aim high but get the basics right

At Capacity we're an ambitious bunch, with big plans to change the landscape of Children's Social Care. This is reflected in big goals and growth plans for our ventures. Aiming high and aspiring to achieve great things is at the heart of what we do, but getting the basics (like recruitment, systems, policies and processes) right is equally important.

We're learning to factor in enough time to get the basics right at the start and build in time for reflection, learning and adapting, instead of expecting to hit the ground running.

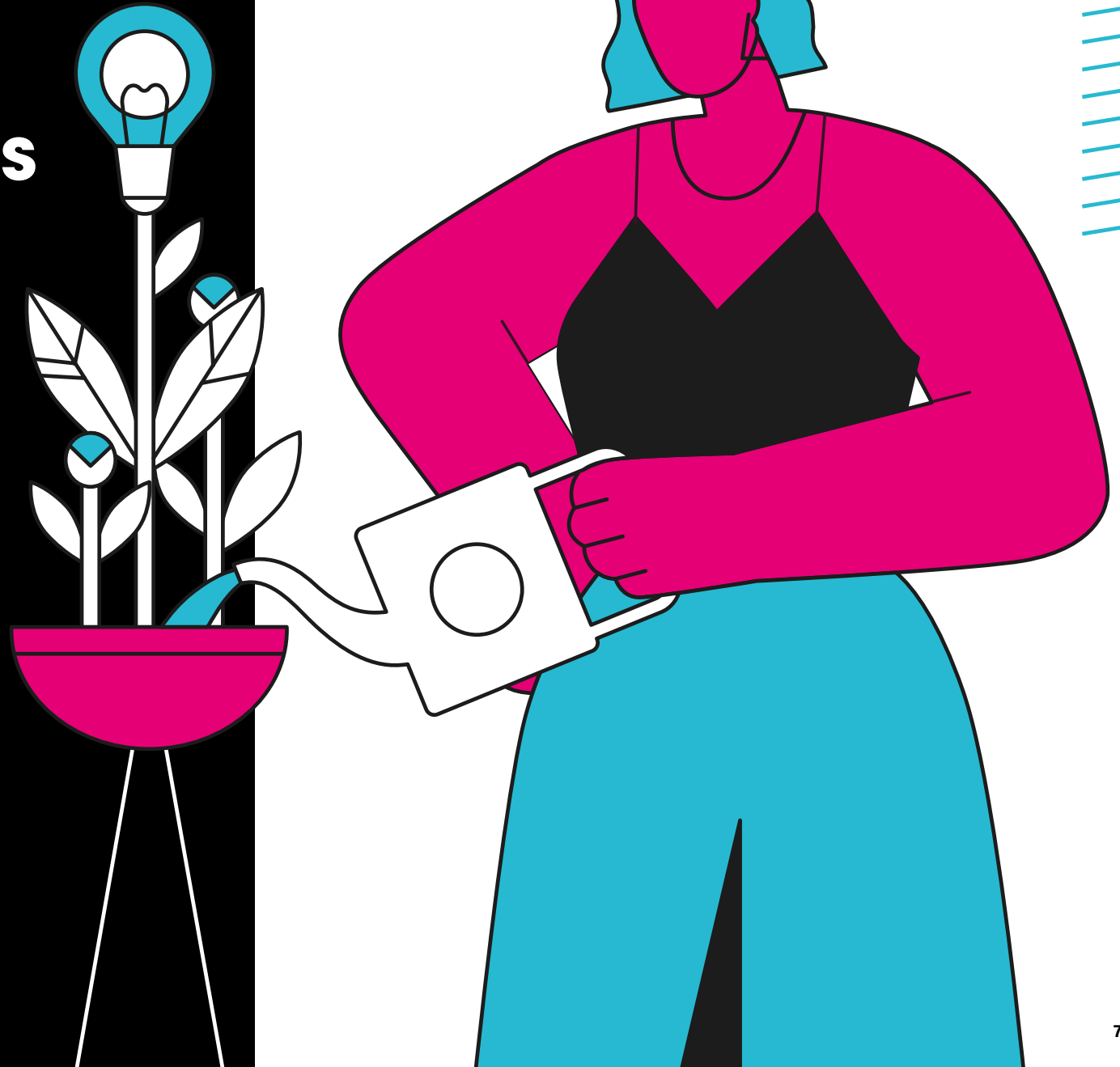
Part five:

TAKING A STEP BACK



They say that all good things must come to an end.

So, while we've been hard at work delivering our projects and ventures, we've also taken a step back from some of the bigger projects we've worked on in recent years. We love working alongside our partners to get an intensive project off the ground, but once our projects are up and running, it's usually time for our involvement to come to an end. We want to take some time to reflect on the success of these projects, and the difference they've made so far.

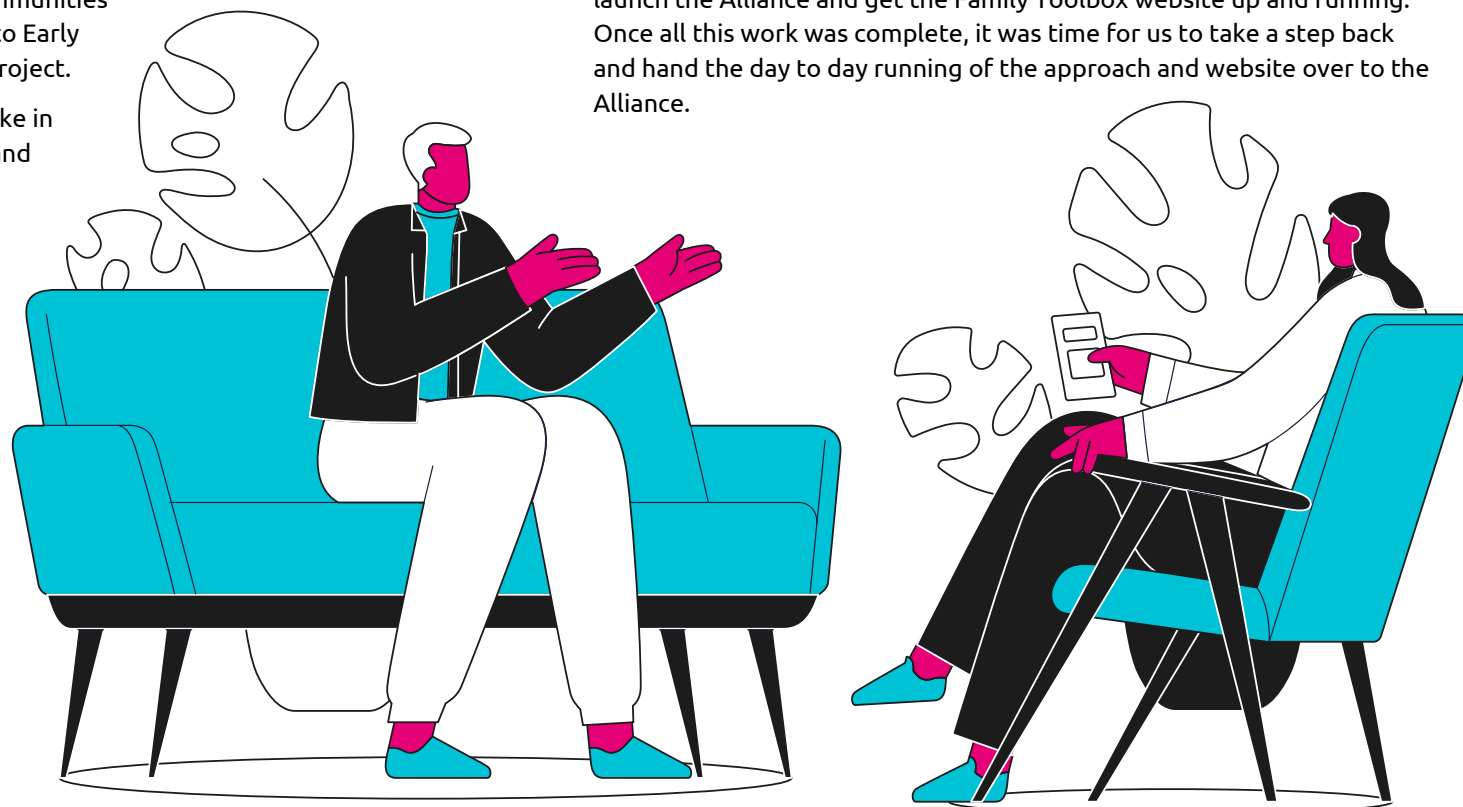


Family Toolbox: Changing the face of Early Help in Wirral

A bit of background

In 2019, Capacity was commissioned by Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council to work with families, communities and the council to design a new approach to Early Help as part of their Community Matters project.

To paint a picture of what Early Help was like in the Wirral, we reviewed the existing data and spoke to over 450 children, young people, professionals, carers and guardians. In January 2020, we collated all of our insights into a report and presented our suggested new approach to Early Help. As a result of our work, Wirral MBC asked us to continue to develop an innovative model of Early Help, co-designed with families, funders and commissioners, and support collaboration between the council and its community.



In April 2022 we launched a new approach to Early Help called 'The Family Toolbox Alliance'. The Alliance is made up of a group of third sector organisations working together with the Local Authority, sharing risk and responsibility for success and promoting earlier, more family centred interventions at the community level. We worked with the council to ensure this model was commissioned as a 5-9 year contract.

Alongside this Alliance model, the Capacity Team also designed, developed and launched a unique digital support tool - the Family Toolbox website. This website was created alongside families with the purpose of enabling them to find tips and tools to approach their challenges and access appropriate, local support afterwards (if they need it).

This was a complex project, taking place over a number of years. Our team worked intensively to develop the new approach to Early Help, launch the Alliance and get the Family Toolbox website up and running. Once all this work was complete, it was time for us to take a step back and hand the day to day running of the approach and website over to the Alliance.

Family Toolbox in numbers

We caught up with the Alliance to think about Family Toolbox's success and impact to date. They told us that during its first year:

26,650 accessed the **Family Toolbox website**

123 **events and briefings** were attended by the team to share information on Family Toolbox

7,854 **parents and children** worked with the Family Toolbox Alliance

£97,750 **awarded in grants** by the Alliance to support organisations to deliver services and fill service gaps

282 families were asked about their experiences of the Family Toolbox Alliance services and the Family Toolbox website:

95%

said they had **support that is local** to them or easy to access

89%

said they **felt connected to others** through their experience

95%

95% said their **whole family had benefited**

99%

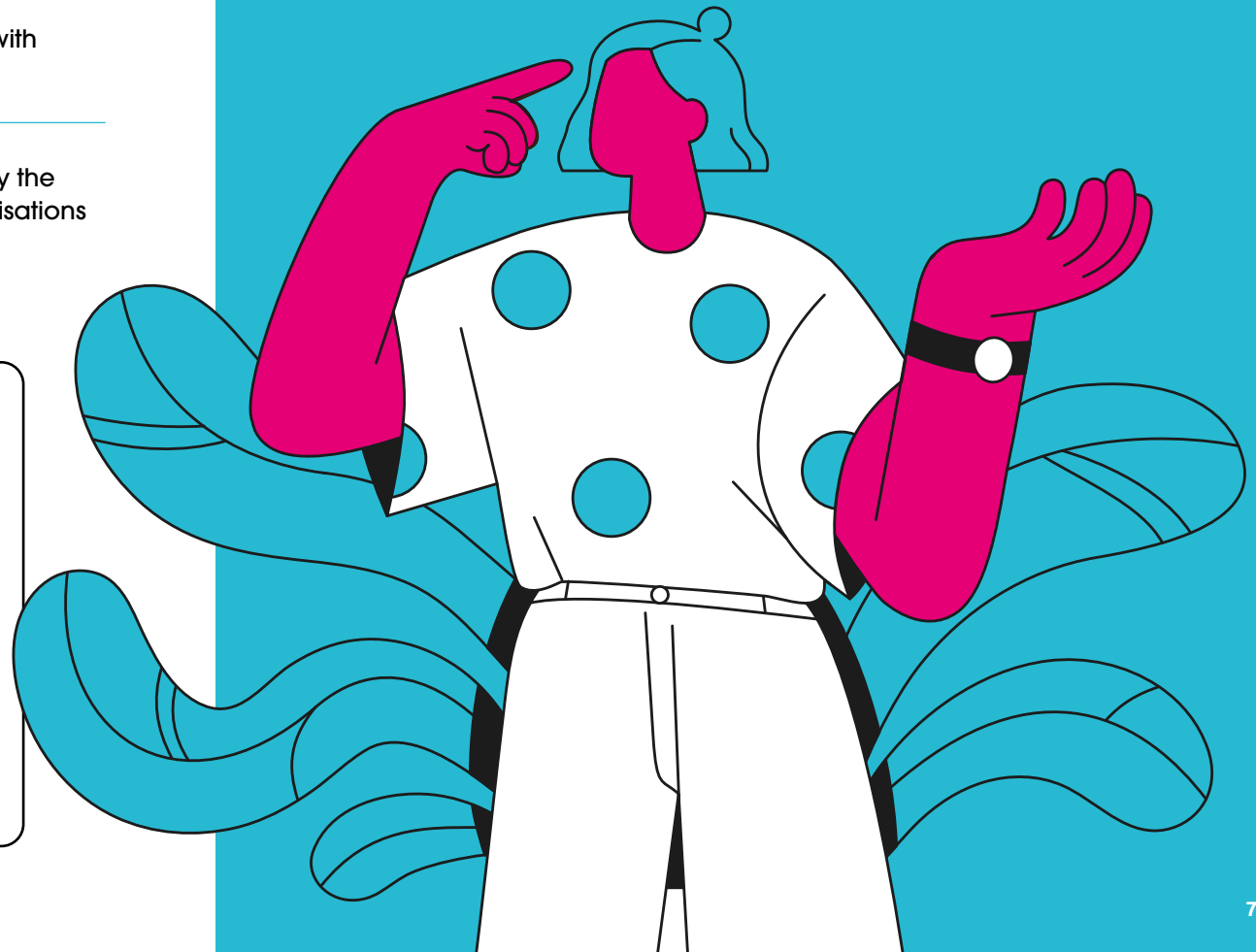
said they **felt empowered** by the experience

“

The stuff I value, that makes the biggest difference, is here to stay.

”

Jodie, Parent



Lilycross: Reimagining step-down care







A bit of background

In February 2020, the UK was facing the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. Across the country, resources were being mobilised to make sure there were adequate facilities and protocols to reduce the spread, treat Covid-19 patients and avoid overwhelming acute healthcare services.

It was against this context that plans for Lilycross emerged. A brand new service, Lilycross intended to increase the availability of hospital beds by offering community based step-down support to those recovering from an illness in a residential setting. Capacity was approached by Catalyst Choices, one of our existing partners, for our support to make Lilycross a reality.

With a tight deadline of just a few months in the midst of a global pandemic, Capacity joined the project (alongside the Eric Wright Group and Halton Borough Council), providing support to Catalyst Choices and leading on all aspects of recruitment, procurement and project management.

Working together with the partners, within just 3 months we managed to:

-  Identify a former care home in Widnes as the most appropriate asset.
-  Established contractual agreements between parties.
-  Secured a lease.
-  Refurbished a 60-bed building to CQC compliance standards.
-  Recruited, onboarded and trained an initial staff team of 50 people.
-  Established referral pathways from acute local hospitals.

In May 2020, Lilycross opened its doors to the public. Initially commissioned as a step-down service for patients recovering from major illnesses, Lilycross adapted over time to changing health priorities and expanded its services, also acting as a step-up service and long-term care provider. The service became a crucial resource for Halton Borough Council, St Helen's Borough Council and Warrington Borough Council, continuing to deliver support way beyond the original 6 months that were originally commissioned.

Sadly, in June 2023 the Lilycross story came to an end when the private owner of the building sold the site. This was hugely disappointing for everyone involved. Despite this, we still have hopes that the highly replicable model of support can be built once again.

Lilycross in numbers

Now the Lilycross journey has come to an end (for the time being at least), we thought it would be an ideal time to think about the impact it had, and how it improved the lives of those involved over the past 3 years.

915 residents were supported at Lilycross

4

partners worked together to make Lilycross a reality

50

local people were recruited to join the staff team

6

weeks was the average stay for residents

£1.5m

was invested in the service

We provided
£6.3m
saving for the NHS

24/7
referral acceptance
provided by Lilycross

We provided
50%
of step-down provision in the area

We partnered with
3
neighbouring local authorities

“

When I got to Lilycross, I was in bed, I couldn't get out. I was afraid of going on the street and falling. When I left Lilycross, I could walk again. I was unwell for a while but now I feel much better, and I'm able to move around my room by myself.

”

Martha, 82



Part six:

WHAT WE LEARNED ALONG THE WAY



As we've described throughout this report, we're an organisation that's 100% committed to learning. We try our best to make sure that no learning is lost, and that our successes and challenges are captured by creating open and honest opportunities to reflect on our everyday ways of doing things. So, we wanted to take a moment to reflect on what we've learned about supporting public and third sector clients to do things differently.

1. Meet clients where they're at

We've realised that we make a lot of assumptions at the start of a project. Whether it's a client having the right documentation in place, well-briefed teams, or the right people on board, we've learned that we can't always take these things for granted. Our assumptions don't always align what's really happening for our client, leading to unexpected barriers to project delivery.

We're getting better at meeting clients where they're at, taking time at the beginning to make sure we're all on the same page and providing our support to get key interdependencies in place.

2. Clients have a lot on their plates

It's no secret that public and third sector leaders have demanding and challenging workloads. When working with these leaders, our projects are often just one of many competing priorities for their time and attention. It can be tough for these leaders to strike the balance between being proactive - creating the conditions for real change - and reactive - dealing with the day to day demands of their roles.

We're finding new ways to be flexible and adaptable when supporting busy leaders, prioritising working around the schedules of those in demanding roles.

3. Pull back to the 'bigger picture'

The projects we deliver are usually just a piece of the puzzle, focusing on one aspect of the work our client does or a particular challenge they're facing. Even when you're solving one piece of the puzzle, it's important to have sight of the full jigsaw so you can understand where it fits. This can sometimes be tough and require you to ask difficult questions of your client, especially if some pieces of the puzzle just don't fit.

We're supporting and challenging our clients to understand their problems within the context of the bigger picture, to get to the bottom of the tough questions.



Thank you!



“

Last year saw us work with dozens of public and third sector organisations who deliver some really important work. We're extremely privileged to have worked alongside some outstanding leaders and doers who are dedicated to making a positive difference to the lives of local people. We'd like to take the chance to say a huge thank you to everyone we had the opportunity to collaborate with for their partnership and dedication.

”

Emma Lord, Director, Capacity



Plus Dane Housing



Our members

As things stand, 90% of Capacity shares are held by social enterprises and social investors. This means that £9 out of every £10 we make goes back into funding work with communities across the UK. We'd like to say thank you to all of our members for making the work we do possible.

Catch 22

Catch22 is a charity and social business, designing and delivering services that build resilience and aspiration in people and communities. Last year they supported more than 140,000 people across 120 different services and programmes.

Catch22's work has spanned over 200 years, and they currently deliver services and programmes across three strategic hubs:

- Employability and Skills
- Young People, Families and Communities
- Justice and Education

**catch
22**

Big Society Capital

Big Society Capital is the UK's leading social impact investor, whose mission is to grow the amount invested in tackling social issues and inequalities in the UK. They do this by investing their own capital and helping others invest for impact too.

Since 2012 Big Society Capital have helped build a market that has directed more than £9bn into social purpose organisations tackling issues from homelessness and mental health to childhood obesity and fuel poverty, a ten-fold increase in ten years.

**BIG
SOCIETY
CAPITAL**

Burlington Retrofit CIC

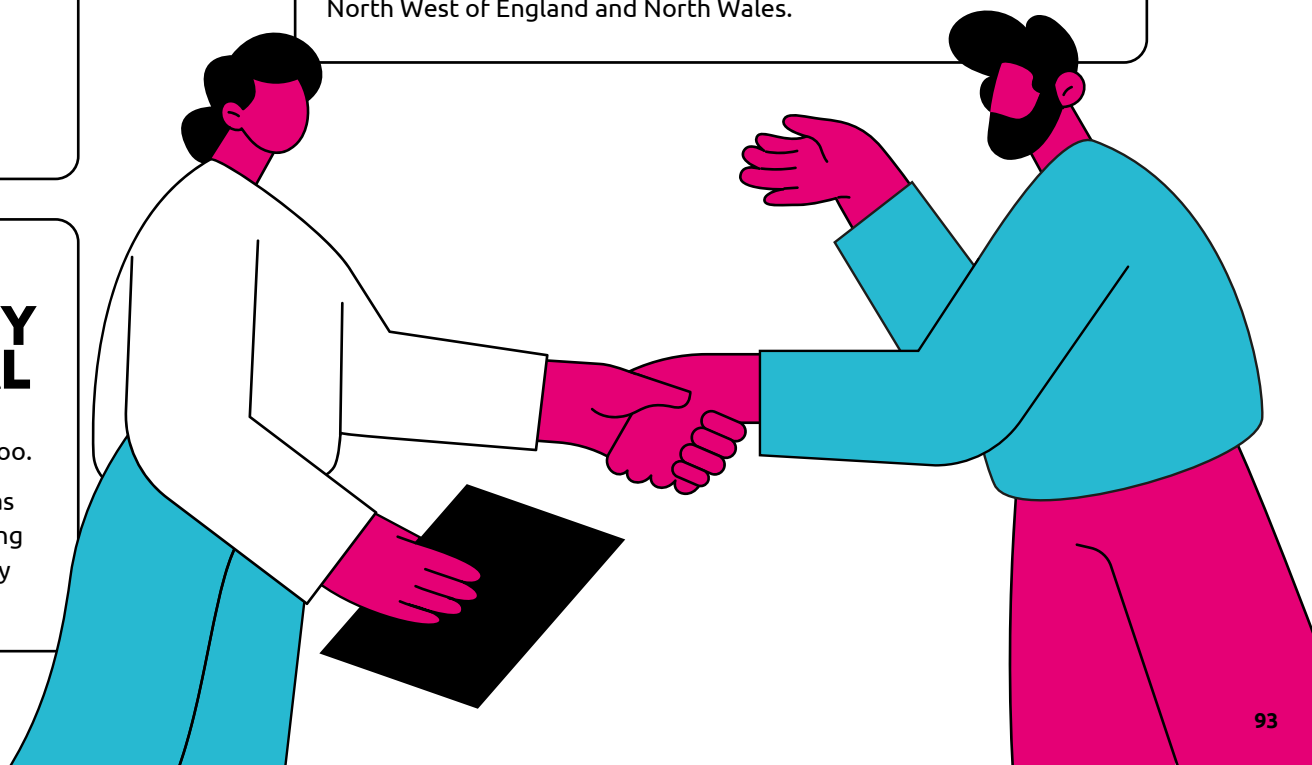
Burlington Retrofit CIC is working to develop a model to support communities with residential retrofitting across the UK.

We are Capacity CIC

We Are Capacity CIC is Capacity's staff owned Community Interest Company limited by guarantee. Their objective is to create positive impact for local people by supporting models that are designed and driven by the people who use them.

CAPACITY

Established in 2021, We Are Capacity CIC supports the improved health and wellbeing of disadvantaged communities (both geographical and communities of need) by engaging, supporting and empowering local people and community organisations, and building effective partnerships across all sectors in and around the North West of England and North Wales.







**Making Public Services
People Services**

The story doesn't end here...

**Want to know more about the work we'll be delivering throughout 2024?
Follow our journey through our website or socials channels.**

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