



dg:cities

Wave 2 Case Studies

The case studies have been sourced from discussions with grantees as part of Wave 2. These grantees were randomly selected to take part in a 1:1 interview with the DG Cities team.

The case studies have been developed to have specific learning focuses, rather than to cover all aspects of the grantee's activity. They are intended to be shared as useful learning resources with the grantee network and wider community.

The following case studies are included below:

- **[#1: Afghan Women's Empowerment Project](#)** – Building a community of motivated women, by [Kaweyan International CIC](#)
- **[#2: Little Me Being Free](#)** – Children learn emotional literacy and self-regulation, by [A Truefitt collective](#)
- **[#3: A men's mental health drop-in facility](#)** – by [The Proper Bloke's Club](#)
- **[#4: Multisports for people with disabilities to get active, have fun and connect](#)** by the [South London Special League](#)
- **[#5: Sight Support Outreach Service](#)** – Connecting and helping visually impaired adults, by [BlindAid](#)
- **[#6: Addressing health barriers with movement and connection](#)** by the [Abkara Women's Group](#)
- **[#7: Healthy cooking for BAME communities](#)** by [World of Hope](#)

Case Study #1: – Afghan Women's Empowerment Project – Building a community of motivated women

Organisation name: Kaweyan International CIC

Project name: Afghan Women's Empowerment Project

Location(s): Eltham Page, Eltham Park & Progress, Eltham Town & Avery Hill

Which grant: Micro Phase 2 Round 1

Time period: June 2025 – November 2025

Key learning: Women gained motivation and became aware of resources and services that can support their goals, which increased their overall wellbeing.

How Kaweyan International helped Afghan women to Feel and Stay Well

This GHCF Micro grant project delivered sessions for Afghan refugee and migrant women focused on wellbeing, enterprise, and confidence-building. Afghan women expressed that they experienced cultural or family barriers preventing them from attending university or college, leading to isolation, depression and difficulty in finding work, which the project aimed to address through encouragement, health awareness, communication, and business skills development. Kaweyan International provided ongoing motivation through the sessions, emphasising the opportunities that are available and encouraging the pursuit of jobs, including entry-level ones like housekeeping, as a stepping stone to further work or study.

How did the participants benefit

Kaweyan International identified a lack of a cohesive Afghan women's community in Greenwich and therefore improved this through establishing the necessary environment for a community to grow. The founder of the project has experienced the challenging circumstances of fleeing Kabul and starting over in London, which can initially have a significant impact on one's mental health, so she shared her personal experience to connect with Afghan women. Further on **social connection**, the founder set up a WhatsApp group chat to signpost women to key assets and services and share knowledge and advice to help the attendees re-gain their **confidence** (O-14).

Women increased their **economic participation** through learning business skills, celebrating their achievements alongside over 100

other women, and attending follow-up sessions. They also benefitted from on the phone support and guided discussions about their aspirations and in creating a clear plan to achieve them. This helped the participants to take the necessary steps towards education, finding a job or creating a personal business – all reasons to leave the house, socialise, feel motivated and begin to achieve their goals.



The project served the purpose of making them **aware of resources** related to finding education and employment as well as demonstrating how to apply healthy behaviours such as creating social connections, feeling motivated, gaining knowledge about resources and accessing them, outside of the project, sustaining the learning done in the sessions (O-22, O-23).

The changes and impacts for the organisation

An unexpected outcome was the shift from initial shyness and low attendance, due to family constraints, to consistent engagement, with women now actively calling and requesting help to find jobs or open their own business. Women often continued to attend the sessions

even if they had found a job or had started personal business.

The most significant result of the project was the trust built between the organisation and the community, leading women to feel comfortable sharing sensitive family challenges and seeking advice and support from the organisation. This trust also facilitated reaching more people (O-2), leading to the acquisition of new funding.

Overcoming challenges and what worked well

There were some challenges managing community expectations, particularly at the large event where unexpected charges emerged, including for transportation, but the organiser decided to cover the costs themselves. Despite this, they managed the event, including organising booths and entertainment like a fashion show with models, which was highly engaging for the women. The organisation received positive feedback from the community after the event, leading to numerous calls and increased interest in their work, which aids in integrating Afghan people with different communities.

The reporting included online surveys, which was a new concept and initially challenging for the community, but with assistance, they have been able to complete the forms, and Kaweyan International has collected useful feedback. They actively support women's businesses by purchasing catering and food items from them, also motivating community businesses, and leading to ongoing engagement.

Beyond the funding and local opportunities

Kaweyan International CIC has secured funding from a different funder for another project, which will allow them to continue their weekly sessions focused on business and cooperative development. They

emphasise that the main issues causing poor mental health and depression for this community of women and others are a lack of jobs, money, and networking opportunities, leading to isolation. Their goal is to integrate Afghan women with other communities so they can communicate and learn from each other.

Some women took the business skills they were taught in these sessions and established their own businesses – a tailoring/alteration business and a cleaning service, both set up by participants in this GHCF-funded Micro project.

VCSE lead, 1:1 Discussion

You can contact Kaweyan International CIC at:

Email: kamila@kamilasidiqi.com

Website:
<https://kaweyancic.com/>

Case Study #2: Little Me Being Free – Children learn emotional literacy and self-regulation

How

Organisation name: A Truefitt Collective Dance Theatre

Project name: Little Me Being Free

Location(s): Charlton Hornfair and Shooters Hill

Which grant: Micro Phase 2

Time period: August 2025 – December 2025

Key learning: Increased confidence in working with younger children

Truefitt helped early years children to Start, Be and Feel Well

This Micro grant enabled a new pilot to provide dance and mindfulness sessions in two primary schools, in collaboration with an early years consultant. The aim of the pilot was to help early years children – nursery, reception, and up to year one – to enhance their emotional literacy and self-regulation. This pilot used similar content that had been effective in Truefitt's other initiatives but changed the format and structure for working with younger children, including working more closely with schools to gather feedback for development.

How did the children and school staff benefit

This pilot supported children who were referred to the sessions due to having poorer emotional wellbeing, such as low confidence, anxiety, or who were experiencing significant home or school changes, including bereavement.

The consistent presence of a dedicated team member and an enjoyable and engaging session that felt 'outside the usual school day' supported children's mental health (0-14) and provided stability. The team and the school teachers observed positive impacts for those children who found it hard to stay in the classroom and for those with poor attendance. The sessions were reported to support the children's focus and to improve their overall learning.

Truefitt produced a report summarising their findings for the schools and basic guidelines detailing the exercises and theory, such as the mindfulness techniques used, to encourage continued use in the classroom (0-22). Both schools viewed the resources positively and expressed interest in receiving further training. A key impact here is that schools began to adopt a different, more expressive approach to delivery, allowing children to do what works for them, for example to lie down during a movement session if they chose to do so.

"They really enjoyed it. I was surprised by how some came out of their shell. Some attention spans are quite short, but they seemed more grounded after the session. I'm looking forward to the next one."

A teacher participant, M-Form



The nature of this project and working with children means it is not straightforward to capture or measure benefits through quantitative changes for example. Rather, it is likely to have a longer-term impact on children's wellbeing and resilience, especially where it is revisited and continued in the future.

Across Truefitt and the schools, the value of these types of sessions was well recognised alongside there being a demand and need for this type of support.

The changes and impacts for Truefitt

Through collaborating with an early years consultant, the organisation was able to better understand the development and curriculum of two-to-five-year-olds and how to support them with emotional literacy and self-regulation (O-3, O-5). This increased their confidence and the feeling of value among the staff, especially as the pilot was a new way to deliver for them (Im-1).

A positive unexpected outcome of the project was the increased engagement and eagerness to collaborate from school staff, including clear debrief meetings after each workshop, this was noted as a helpful outcome for both sides. This positive outcome stemmed from Truefitt learning to set clear boundaries and expectations, emphasising that staff members needed to engage with the funded project.

Overcoming challenges and what worked well

A significant challenge was that an initial registered school withdrew due to staffing difficulties, which meant a replacement school had to be found.

Other difficulties included inadequate spaces for dance sessions, such as regular classrooms or kitchen spaces. The schools often referred more students than the approved and capped number of children for each session. There was not the capacity in the pilot (given the need for dedicated team members for a set number of children) or the dedicated space to support more children, but keenness to do so going forward.

One of the schools failed to provide prior communication regarding children with one-to-one support or special educational needs, making it difficult to adapt sessions.

Another major challenge was the schools' general staff capacity and turnover, which meant there was not always a committed member of staff to oversee the administration or provide the stable oversight. There was also a lack of administrative capacity to organise the logistics of after school or lunch clubs for similar sessions, even when the schools expressed a desire to continue the work.

Beyond the funding and local opportunities

The successful pilot and positive feedback have motivated Truefitt to pursue continued collaborations with partner schools (O-10). They have learnt that establishing partnerships can be difficult and time consuming, such that it may work best to focus on building strong, long-term relationships with schools directly.

Truefitt has previously struggled to maintain the sustainability of their project, as they are dependent on securing ongoing funding. The successes of this project have motivated them to expand their reach.

You can contact 'A Truefitt Collective' at:

www.atriuefittcollective.com

Instagram: @atriuefittcollective

Email: atriuefittcollective@outlook.com

[Case Studies continue below]

Case Study #3: A men's mental health drop-in facility in Greenwich

Organisation name: The Proper Blokes Club

Project name: A men's mental health drop-in facility in Greenwich.

Location(s): Woolwich

Which grant: Enabling Phase 1

Time period: September 2025 – May 2026

How The Proper Blokes Club helped men to Feel Well

This Enabling grant aimed to break the stigma around men's mental health by creating a welcoming space for men to meet others who may be in a similar situation and to start talking openly about it. The drop-in space has a preventative focus so that men in the local community who may be experiencing mental health issues and may feel isolated, especially those who are unemployed, retired or have physical health issues, see it as a first step to improved mental health. This kind of space targets particularly those who may feel intimidated by more formal support forms.

How did the participants benefit

Men who attended this group benefitted from **access to mental health** support (O-26) and a safe place to meet with others who may be going through similar difficulties.

"I'm a walk leader for Woolwich but having this drop in space was a great place for me open up without the pressure of leading the group"
(Participant, reported by VCSE leader)

In the sessions, men can **share openly** about any topic that worries them either in a 1:1 discussion or with the rest of the group. Having these conversations has been reported to increase their overall wellbeing and ability to support their own mental health (O-24)

"Each lad that came into my drop-in space left feeling better than when they came in" (VCSE leader, 1:1 Discussion)

A wider community impact has also been identified, that the benefits that men gain by attending can be **extended to their friends and families** as positive follow-on and further sharing.

The changes and impacts for the Proper Blokes Club

This organisation also runs 'walk and talk' groups for men. However, having a drop-in space open to the Woolwich community has been beneficial in extending their reach as anyone can stop by for information, including those in close vicinity who reflect target groups.

After a few initial sessions at their first venue, the Proper Blokes Club realised that they **needed a more visible space** with higher footfall to increase their reach. –

"Visible from the front area so passers-by could see our roller banner and understand the purpose of the sessions. This visibility helped normalise the idea of men seeking support and contributed to an open, approachable atmosphere."
(VCSE leader, 1:1 Discussion)

By delivering these sessions, the organisation has learned that Woolwich is an area where there are men who struggle with mental health challenges and this type of support is needed to help reduce the inequalities that may stem from that.

Overcoming challenges and what worked well

The organisation realised that there are many complications in engaging their target group, particularly men who might not seek any forms of support and are therefore harder to reach. At times, the club had lower participation than their capacity and we're keen to engage with and support more men.

Collaborative efforts with the Job Centre played a key role in overcoming this challenge for some, as the centre referred men to the club as and when it was suitable. This helped the Proper Blokes Club support more men. Overall, this experience showed the value of being connected within the local neighbourhood and with other organisations, services, and venues – this can help organisations reach members of different communities.

Beyond the funding and local opportunities

The club has secured new funding within Greenwich so they are planning their next steps and exploring other areas in the borough where their offer may be most needed. For the new offer, they plan to offer a mix of Walk and Talk sessions and a drop-in space with options for participants to do either or both.

You can find out more about
'The Proper Bloke's Club' at:

<https://www.theproperblokesclub.co.uk/>

Case Study #4: South London Special League:

Multisports for people with disabilities to get active, have fun and connect

Organisation name: South London Special League

Project name: "Get Active, Make Friends & Have Fun". Multisports for people with disabilities (Including Tennis & Powerchair Football)

Location(s): Woolwich Waves Leisure Centre at Woolwich

Which grant: Delivery Phase 1

Time period: September 2024 – February 2026

Key learning: Tailoring an inclusive offer for different needs, with a focus on confidence and connection.

How South London Special League supported people & adults with disabilities to Be Well

This Delivery fund supported the establishment of weekly multisport sessions and power chair football sessions. This organisation also runs monthly football leagues working with schools and two adult leagues a month. The multisport sessions consist of various games, including Boccia, New Age Curling, Target Ball, Tennis, Cricket, and Football. A carousel delivery model was used, to enable everyone to try out different sports. An inclusive approach is central to the club, supported by its highly experienced and passionate staff.



Powerchair
Football
session

How did the participants benefit

Adult and children participants benefit from **physical activity** (O-28, O-29), **social connection** (Im-5) and feeling less isolated (Im-6).

Many participants and their carers had little to no prior experience in the games offered and being part of them has enabled participants to **develop new skills, understand rules, and build confidence in a supportive environment.**

The VCSE leader believes that the programme also has a wider positive impact on the participants' families and the local communities. This is a result of the participants improvements in their communication and confidence, which translates into their life outside the sessions too.

As all equipment is provided, the financial barriers are lifted making the sports and the sessions accessible for all.

The project has seen a range of personal stories of growth alongside the benefits of physical activity. These include overcoming daily challenges, and increased confidence and connection.



Over time some have communicated more with other users as well as with other carers, parents and coaches. A consistent, welcoming, and familiar space is really important for many users.

"[Participant] enjoys being with his peers and has formed strong friendships. He often waits for his friends before joining in and likes to observe new activities before taking part. His confidence and independence have grown significantly, leading to him travelling independently by bus and meeting his carer at the bus stop... He has reflected hard work, resilience, and personal development" (VCSE testimony about a participant)

Another previous participant of the Powerchair Football Club, who went on to represent England at the national level, has now returned as a coaching assistant for the sessions. They have brought outstanding guidance and experience to the club's current users.

"Our program isn't just about the time that they spend with us. It's about getting to know the family or the carers and how we can support them around the session as well."

"Being able to support them and give them guidance and praise on things that they're doing outside of the session, really supports them with anything that they do in life. Because they're being recognized... and knowing that you know about their whole life and not just the time with you."

VCSE Delivery lead, 1:1 Discussion

The changes and impacts for South London Special League

This Delivery fund allowed the organisation to increase the range of disabilities they could cater for and to add 4–5 new activities in place of a previous tennis session. In that way they have **increased their reach (O-2)** and have been able to **respond better to needs while addressing health inequalities (IE-2)**.

“I don’t know if it’s something we would’ve tried as we didn’t know it would be successful. I think it’s really helped and supported it to grow and it now opens the sessions up for the future” (VCSE leader)

Through attending the networking sessions, this group gained awareness of other Greenwich-based programmes (O-9) and shared ideas on communication with different groups of people, including those who are disabled, their parents, other organisations. This sparked ideas on how to effectively outreach and introduce new sessions to the community and helped them purchase the right equipment that will benefit their participants most.

The staff and supporting volunteers have also **improved their knowledge** on how to run different sessions, how to use specialist equipment, and how to communicate effectively with those with diverse needs (O-5).

Overcoming challenges and what worked well

Challenges for this VCSE included the high prices of the equipment required, specifically the Powerchairs used for the powerchair football sessions. Further, there is oversubscription of their valuable offer, as it is the only one of this type in South East London meaning that their users travel from multiple boroughs. The want to be inclusive also means being flexible with how the sessions run is really important, where the staff have been creative and open to adaptations.

Strategies that they’re implementing include sharing systems between users and with support and choices before and after the main activity to enable users to enjoy the space and activities. Sessions have also been extended to allow for more dedicated time for the game playing.

Beyond the funding and local opportunities

The organisation has successfully applied for new funding on the back of this project and is looking to continue their offer and explore the possibility of new and different sessions. They also aim to continue supporting the participants’ families and carers in the appropriate and tailored ways, including linking them to other services and organisations to support health in other ways such as better nutrition.

Case Study #5: Sight Support Outreach Service – Connecting and helping visually impaired adults.

Organisation name: Blind Aid

Project name: Outreach service to address health inequalities

Location(s): across Greenwich

Which grant: Delivery Phase 2

Time period: From May 2025 and extended to October 2026.

Key learning: Uncovering the needs of a 'hidden community' and the value of ongoing and trusted support.

How BlindAid supported a 'hidden community' with their needs and provided connection.

BlindAid has a long legacy – 192 years – of supporting visually impaired adults across London. The GHCF Delivery grant has enabled Blind Aid to re-introduce its in-person service into Greenwich and to meet the needs of the most vulnerable. Social isolation can be compounded by visual impairment, especially among older users.

The at-home support service provides a consistent social contact and practical help from a dedicated member of staff who can build relationships and trust with the users. The practical help includes reading post, such as written letters from the NHS to avoid missed appointments. The engagement over-time also allows the team member to know the user well such that they can notice distress, deteriorating sight, or difficulties in independent living, and help users connect with additional, necessary support.

The staff member is often providing a critical social connection for the person, who may not have in-person contact during a typical week. Data from BlindAid and its users highlights that 56% of supported people cannot get out independently and 44% are alone every day. Furthermore, 70% of those supported do not engage with any other charity, relying primarily on Blind Aid.

How did the participants benefit

BlindAid has supported 46 local people with its at-home outreach service.

BlindAid undertakes a survey with its users, and this has identified a set of positive impacts:

- **94% felt less isolated, more confident**, and more positive about the future. (Im-6)
- 88% reported increased independence and quality of life.
- 69% said the service helped them **stay connected with the NHS**. (O-22)
- 75% said it helped them manage the emotional side of vision impairment.
- 19% reported a 'life-changing impact' from the service, with 37% reporting a significant positive impact and 38% reported some positive impact on their life.

It is however recognised that statistics like these do not fully reflect the quality of experience and range of stories that services like this provide to individuals, and which sit behind the numbers. Presenting the value of the service can be challenging for funding applications.

For example, one (younger) individual was supported in developing their confidence to travel independently and take up new cultural and economic opportunities across London. There were also a few occasions when the at-home visit was at a timely point as the user needed medical help or trusted intervention, an expected but vital service outcome.

The changes and impacts for BlindAid

The funding enabled BlindAid to **reach more people** (O-3) and **reach them in better ways** (O-4). Before the funding, and since 2019, it had been limited to providing phone support for fewer users.

Blind Aid **established important relationships** with other services and organisations including the occupational therapy team and sensory specialists in Greenwich; and local groups like Blind Independence Greenwich and the Macular Society, which led to referrals in both directions.

The funding also **provided understanding of what the individuals needed and wanted**:

- Many service users report never having been in a room with another visually impaired person – and this means there is significant value in dedicated community projects like those that BlindAid run elsewhere.
- The geography of the borough and the challenging nature of its transport links (including bus dependence) are a significant barrier for individuals to attend local groups like the Macular Society and Blind Independence Greenwich.
- The top three interests identified by service users for future services were accessible technology support at home (75%), local coffee mornings (75%), and group social outings (95%).

“We are alongside people to make sure they're engaging with NHS services.

Because it's a long-term service, we're incredibly well placed to get to know our service users and develop relationships of trust.

For example, if someone is particularly distressed or low one day, we're going to both notice and be able to address this in a way that is sensitive to their own needs.”

BlindAid leader

Overall, BlindAid recognised that there is significant need in the borough. With funding and capacity, more users could be reached, and social activities could be provided or facilitated in collaboration with others.

Overcoming challenges and what worked well

Sustainability – and the need to be flexible.

There was a challenge with staff retention. The dedicated staff person was unable to stay in post, and this meant the 12-month project was interrupted and had a critical recourse gap.

- The funder demonstrated flexibility here to agree a delivery adaptation and project extension with Blind Aid, rather than recovering the funding.
- The new agreement means Blind Aid will move from a fortnightly to a monthly visit for its users. This is not ideal, but it will provide a longer-term service in response to having a new part-time staff member going forward.

The operating model itself has proven to be successful and meeting users' at-home needs and building trust and relationships. Therefore, this will continue through the extension.

Beyond the funding and local opportunities

For many of the users of this project, given their wider health or age and being somewhat home-bound, ongoing support is critical.

Many users also identified their need for social activity and support to access these, where future collaboration could enable this.

There could also be further benefit where connection is established with others, as there can be limited recognition of this group and their needs.

BlindAid are focused on identifying funding and resources to continue to support Greenwich's visually impaired community.

“So that came up really high on the people's list of interests – Local coffee mornings but [most people] wanted group social outings. So, we know there's a need for more social activities within the borough”

BlindAid leader

You can find out more and contact BlindAid at:

<https://blindaid.org.uk/>

Case Study #6: Abkara Women's Group CIC – Addressing health barriers with movement and connection

- *Organisation name:* Abkara Women's Group
- *Project name:* Women's Pilates and Wellbeing Sessions with Bengali Women
- *Location(s):* Woolwich, Plumstead, Charlton, Thamesmead
- *Which grant:* Micro
- *Time period:* August to December 2025
- *Key learning:* Community trust and safe spaces to improve access

How Abkara Women's Group addressed barriers for women to connect and improve their health

Abkara Women's Group CIC delivered a 12-week programme of women-only Pilates and wellbeing sessions primarily for Bengali women living in Greenwich. These women often face health inequalities linked to social isolation, language barriers, cultural stigma around mental health and physical activity, and difficulties accessing mainstream services.

These sessions provided **Pilates as a central activity** for women to improve their mobility, pain management and wellbeing, whilst integrating this with **informal health discussions** and ways to improve social connection.

Safe and trusted women-only spaces were created, at local faith-based venues, and sessions were delivered bilingually.

How did the participants benefit

40 adult women participated directly and consistently in the programme. Responses to the programme's surveys showed high satisfaction, improved wellbeing (1m-8), and strong demand for continuation.

The sessions ensure culturally appropriate access to physical activity (O-28) and health conversations (O-22). This has been supported by being run by women from the community who have brought a flexible approach to adapt sessions where useful and who have been willing to use various engagement methods to build rapport and trust.

*"Every woman should join this class – it is very beneficial and good for our body."
(Participant, reported by the Group)*

Pilates and Yoga were new activities for many of the participants, so these were carefully introduced and built up over time. Whilst some participants were initially hesitant, the sessions were described as enjoyable, beneficial, and an important part of weekly routines."

The changes and impacts for Abkara Women's Group

Abkara Women's Group has been able to build its own **capabilities and skills** in addressing health inequalities. They have undertaken mental health and safeguarding **training** through the Greenwich Be Well programme and NHS Oxleas. They are now more prepared to support vulnerable women.

The community members who run the group have gained valuable experience and **confidence**. The CIC management brings together both public health experience and deep community know-how, with an aspiration to continually move toward being fully community-led.

The project also strengthened the groups' **local collaboration** and monitoring practices.

Overcoming challenges and what worked well

Language and cultural barriers are significant and are understood by the community members who run the sessions. Delivering sessions bilingually was key as well as using two locations—the Greenwich Islamic Centre and St. Richard's church in Charlton—for different areas and demographics.

Providing **language translation**, via a dedicated translator, has been important but has been identified as a limit as the group reaches other communities with other language needs.

Nonetheless, the group has expanded beyond its initial Bengali community focus, with several members from other communities. This has been achieved by using trusted community networks, word-of-mouth, WhatsApp groups, and follow-up 1:1 telephone calls, to build **trust** and **consistent engagement** between sessions.

"An excellent example was that two of our members took part in a cancer screening awareness promotion, and appeared in its promotional materials... community members could feel seen and that it is for them."

Group leader, discussion

Beyond the funding and local opportunities

Abkara Women's Group CIC is now better positioned to deliver culturally appropriate health interventions and engage statutory partners.

They are now looking forward to delivering a larger project which will reach more community members with longer-term physical activities, health discussion and visits from health experts.

Contact details –
abkara.wgroupcic@gmail.com



Case Study #7: Healthy cooking for BAME communities – World of Hope

- *Organisation name:* World of Hope
- *Project name:* Health is Wealth
- *Location(s):* Plumstead, Woolwich, Abbey Wood, Thamesmead
- *Which grant:* Delivery Phase 1
- *Time period:* June 2025 to November 2025
- *Key learning:* Tailoring health behaviours to community needs

How World of Hope helped the community learn to cook and eat well, and to move more

World of Hope is experienced supporting local communities, including food access and providing advice and mentorship. Having been part of the GCDA's cookery training, World of Hope brought this to the community through the GHCF Delivery grant. They built **capacity** and **provided** culturally-relevant healthy cooking and eating.

A positive environment was created, by meaningfully engaging people across shopping, preparation and cooking activities. African and Caribbean music was played and dance encouraged during the cooking sessions.

They ran **community walks** for people to connect and increase their physical activity.

How did the participants benefit

World of Hope provided cookery lessons as 5 sessions over 6 months for 47 people. Many participants were already users of their food bank.

This was supported with Eatwell Guides and information boards to help educate people. This included through their **family events**, covering Q&A and education about heart health and diabetes risks.

The community has been empowered to eat well –

- all participants reported that the project enabled them to **eat more fruits and vegetables** and **reduce their oil and salt** intake.
 - the sessions gave people the **knowledge, confidence, and ideas** to take healthy cooking into their weekly habits at home.
- It also helps **the wider family to live well**, and in the long-term can put **less pressure on the NHS**.
- One example was someone who, by making informed changes to their cooking and eating, was no longer classified as being pre-diabetic.

"More than 90% said that they have attended another cookery lessons before but this was deeper and more tailored to their needs" (Group Leader)



The project also created a group of **Ambassadors** who have continued to educate others in their community on cooking and eating well.

The changes and impacts for World of Hope

This grant helped World of Hope to **use and build local connections**, such as charities that work with families. CACT also supported, taking people's blood pressure, whilst NHS Oxleas and local housing staff attended and shared learning.

Overcoming challenges and what worked well

World of Hope had to **be adaptable** during the project. For example, the kitchen was not large enough to contain everyone so cooking hobs were purchased and a hall was used for more space and to meet health and safety standards.

Round-table discussions were a **valuable evaluation tool** for people to share their experiences and feedback together.

Giving people **agency and ownership** was important. Participants selected the menus so they were tailored to African and Caribbean cuisines. At the end of each session, the group discussed what to eat at home and what to cook in the next session.

Beyond the funding – and what's needed

World of Hope continues to work closely with the community to provide much needed support including a food bank service and giving trusted advice.

However, World of Hope is disappointed that the GHCF did not continue funding for the project to maintain the health impact in their community. It could have created a platform for the Ambassadors to be supported and review their impact as well.

There is continued and growing need for access to healthy food and for healthy cooking sessions for the local communities. It is a proven way to help people address their health challenges.



"It is always said that they are hard to reach (the Afro-Caribbean community) – but it was delivered for them, and it was their idea and their needs"

Group Leader, discussion

World of Hope:

<https://www.worldofhope.org.uk/>