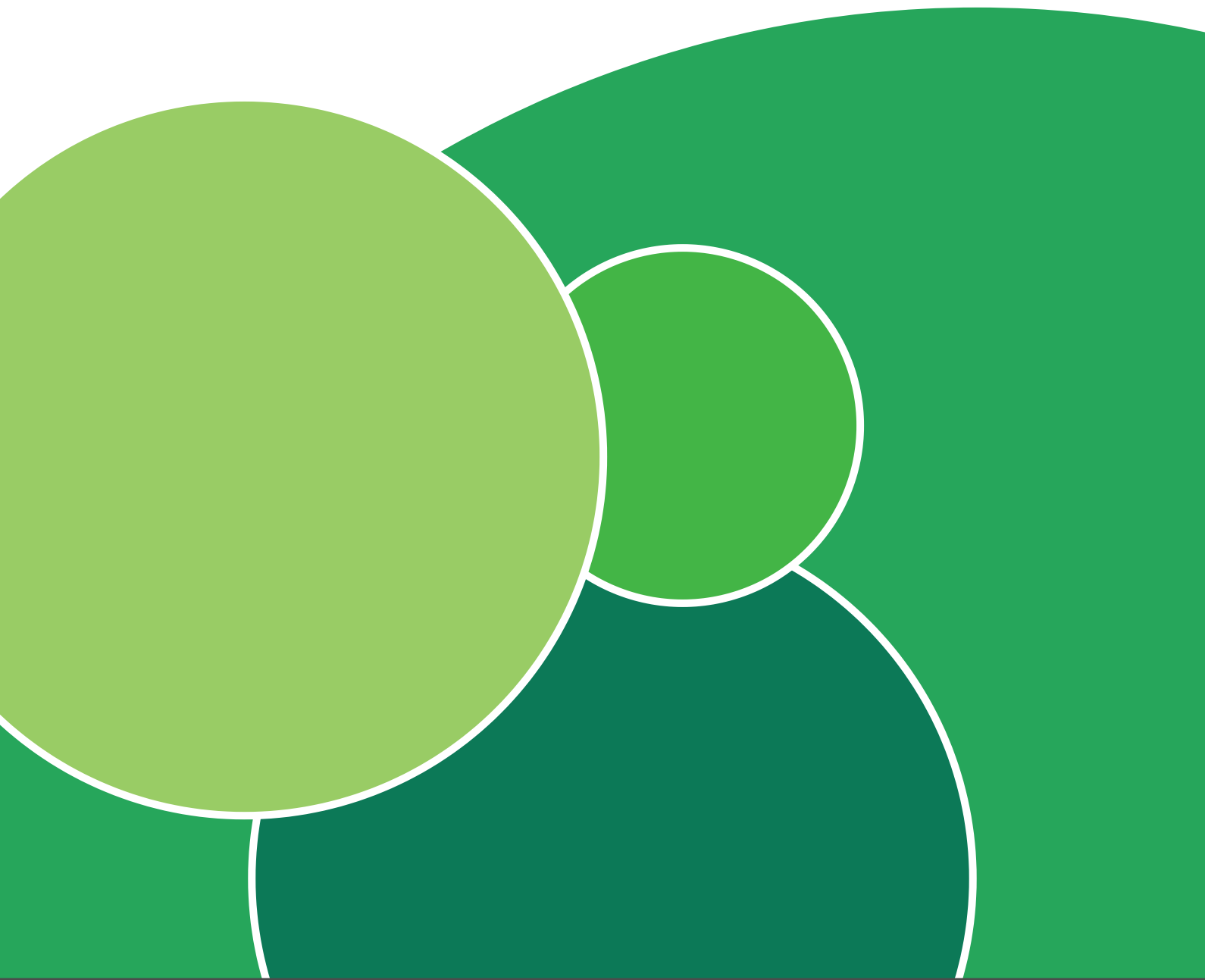


March 2024

Pilot Summary



Introduction

Bolsover Social Circle is a collaborative pilot which has trialled innovative ways of modelling social prescription to improve participant wellbeing and reduce their need to access mental health provision.

Bolsover CVS were approached by GreenSpring in September 2022 to bring together members of the VCSE as a provider collaborative to deliver a green social prescribing pilot over 12 months, supported by £45,000 of NHSEI funding.

Bolsover was chosen as a pilot area as it has longstanding health inequalities, poor social mobility and clinical social prescribing is low.

Commencing early in 2023, the pilot was coordinated through Bolsover CVS and had 3 delivery partners – Bolsover Woodlands Enterprise, Pleasley Pit Visitor Centre and Rhubarb Farm – and worked closely with GreenSpring and other provider collaboratives in Derbyshire.

The aim of Bolsover Social Circle was to bring together VCSE organisations and work in a cross collaborative way with members/volunteers/people in new settings – expanding their social circle.

Key highlights include:-

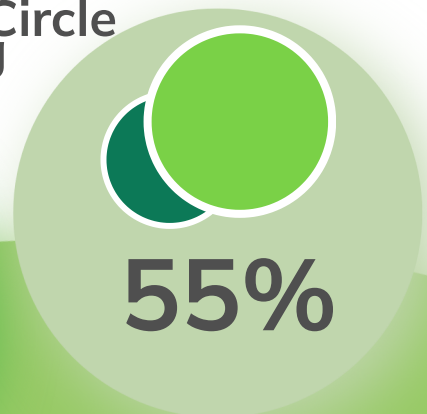
People Supported



Increased Wellbeing



Growing Social Circle



The Partnership

Bolsover Social Circle is a specific collaboration involving three Voluntary & Community Social Enterprise (VCSE) Organisations operating in the Bolsover District - Bolsover Woodlands Enterprise, Pleasley Pit Trust and Rhubarb Farm. The work of this collaborative has been co-ordinated by Bolsover CVS, with the aim being to both oversee the pilot but also critically to quantify the benefits of green social prescribing in improving people's mental health and advocating this approach to wider partners. This pilot formed part of wider work in Derbyshire on green social prescribing, coordinated through the GreenSPring network. This collaborative framework was funded as one of seven 'test and learn' green social prescribing sites in England, focusing especially on communities whose mental health has been disproportionately affected by Covid-19.

The aim of the Bolsover Social Circle pilot is to link green social prescribing and social connectedness, finding out how each of the three settings could potentially widen the social circles of participants, establishing both what works and any barriers to access.

Each of the three delivery settings demonstrated different approaches, coordinated by Bolsover CVS:-



**BOLSOVER
WOODLANDS
ENTERPRISE**

Provides meaningful placements for people with learning difficulties and delivers outdoor services and activities such as wood turning, outdoor furniture manufacture, coppicing and woodland management.



**PLEASLEY PIT
TRUST**

This former coal mining site is a popular county park incorporating the Pit's heritage, walking, cycling and wildlife, with a busy and well used modern visitor centre and cafe. A wide range of local residents use and benefit from the outdoor setting.



**RHUBARB
FARM**

Is a recognised point of referral for agencies and social prescribers providing community gardening/ growing opportunities. This horticultural social enterprise provides work placements, training and volunteering opportunities for people with long term, multiple and complex needs.



BCVS

Undertook the part of locality support - convening the partnership, and supporting ongoing delivery. They also provided advocacy on behalf of the partnership to external local authority and health boards and monitored/evaluated the overall approach.

Case Study

"A volunteer with a diagnosis of autism and social anxiety who struggled to speak at all when he first arrived was recently overheard in extended conversation with an older male volunteer, discussing how much he had improved since joining Rhubarb Farm.

This volunteer has engaged in all of the Bolsover Social Circle activities and recently applied for a Pre-Apprenticeship at Derby College, which is a fantastic turnaround for his future."

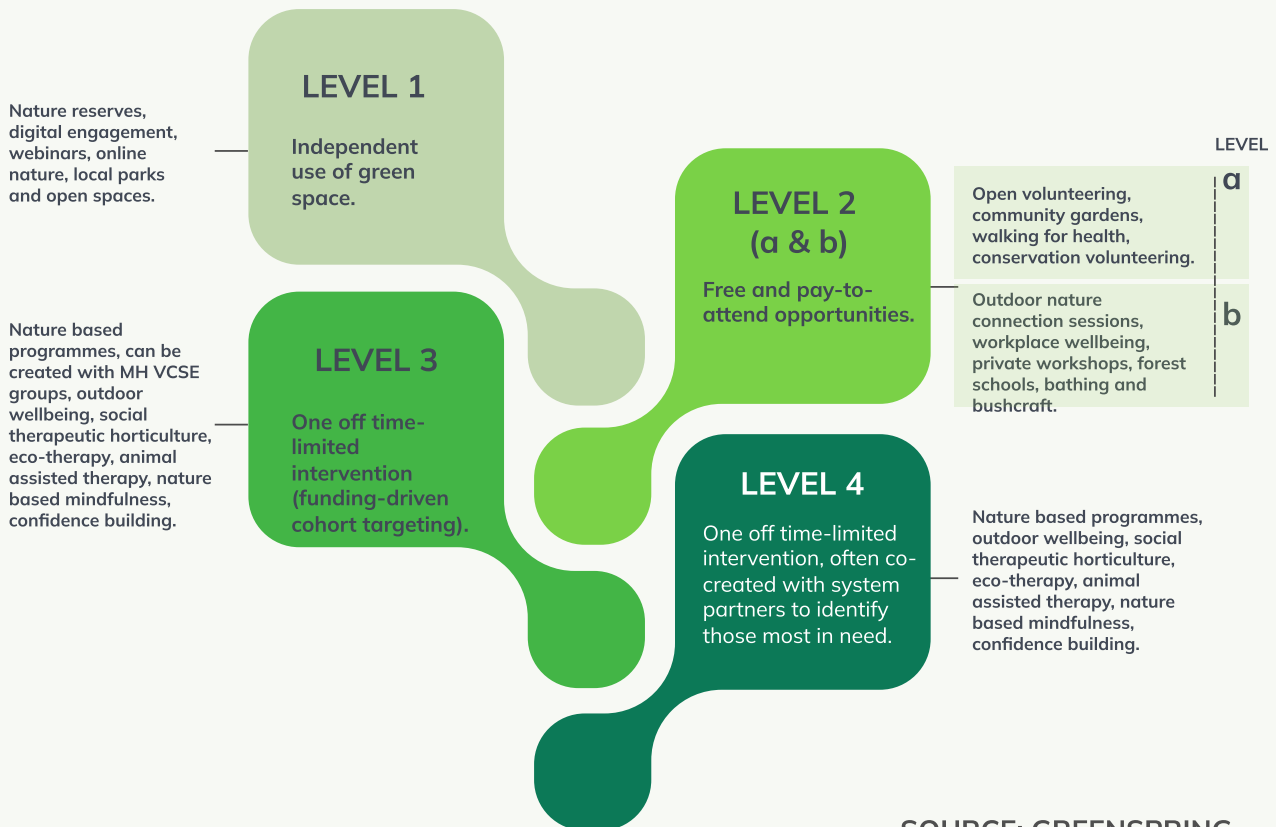
(Rhubarb Farm)



Project Overview

Bolsover Social Circles used the **Levels of Intervention** model provided by GreenSpring to structure its delivery approaches. The levels of intervention were covered by the three delivery partners with Bolsover Woodland Enterprise participants categorised as Level 3 or 4 in terms of the support required to undertake activities. For Pleasley Pit Trust the participants were categorised as Level 1 and for Rhubarb Farm the participants were categorised as Level 2 or 3.

LEVELS OF INTERVENTION



SOURCE: GREENSPRING

This approach enabled the delivery organisations to work with known/trusted organisations to widen their referrals in a less formal way. Cross-referrals also increased, with people being signposted from Talking Mental Health Derbyshire which lessened the requirement to access services through their GP.

Partnership collaboration has worked well and has resulted in shared resources, skills and knowledge which has proved to be valuable. In addition, staff-peer support opportunities have been very positive.

Impact & Value

As demonstrated below, Bolsover Social Circle enabled additional support for 371 individuals over the 12 month period. The majority of these (83%), benefitted from independent use of green spaces, with a further 11% engaging in facilitated nature based activities. The balance of 6% were supported to engage in nature based programmes.

Across all engagement, over half of participants reported an increase in their well being and a growth in their social circle. As reported, organisational cross referrals also occurred as a direct result.

INTERVENTIONS & OUTCOMES	PARTICIPANTS SUPPORTED
LEVEL 0	255
LEVEL 1	53
LEVEL 2	42
LEVEL 3	18
LEVEL 4	3
CROSS-REFERRALS (BSC PARTNERS)	5
VCSE REFERRALS	3
INCREASE IN WELLBEING	52%
GROWTH IN SOCIAL CIRCLE	55%
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS SUPPORTED	371

-CASE STUDY-

"A male visitor sat down with his grandson. He recounted that he comes every other week with his ex-wife and his grandson for a walk and something to eat. He initially said that he didn't feel he needed any help. However, over the next 30 minutes he talked about some of his health issues and his worries about not seeing his grandchildren grow up. He was listened to and provided with reassurance which he appreciated."



Social Return on Investment

For every £1
invested in
Bolsover
Social Circles

**£12.41* in
social value
was
achieved.**



*Utilising the Loop Social Value Tool, a range of social return impact measures were assessed across general, physical and mental community health. The total achieved social value was estimated to be £471, 512.50 against a project total delivery fund of £38,000.

Legacy

Over the course of 12 months, the Bolsover Social Circle has demonstrated a significant impact on the individuals supported through the three delivery organisations, with both staff, volunteers and participants all reporting improvements facilitated through the pilot.

The Social Return on Investment calculation clearly demonstrates the impact on all parties and the potential savings to wider public services that could be generated through the continuation and extension of this approach in Bolsover. This is of particular importance given the ongoing challenge of poor mental and physical health combined with a lack of social mobility across the area.

In a short space of time, funded with just £45,000, this pilot has:

- **Diversified VCSE organisations' delivery models**
- **Supported new initiatives**
- **Enhanced community provision**
- **Improved individual wellbeing**
- **Grown individual social mobility.**

Within the 6 mile radius that the current Bolsover Social Circle pilot has operated, Bolsover CVS have identified almost 30 other Voluntary and Community Social Enterprise Organisations who all add value to individuals expanding their circle in their local community.

In order to build on the momentum of the pilot and to effectively monitor and track impact on both individuals and the VCSE working collaboratively over a longer period, funding is therefore being sought. This will be to both maintain and importantly extend delivery so that the benefits of green social prescribing are shared across all communities.

-CASE STUDY-

"This participant attends once per week. Since starting the social circle, he has spoken to the project worker about his other hobbies and how he would like to develop them. After visiting Rhubarb Farm and Pleasley Pit he independently contacted both organisations to request a voluntary role there. He has now engaged a support worker and discussed other interests that he would like to explore and has gained voluntary employment at another organisation once a week."



