



the bridge

CONNECTING HOME WITH HOPE

IMPACT REPORT SEPTEMBER 22 - AUGUST 23

IMPROVING EVERYDAY WELLBEING

329

PEOPLE SUPPORTED

3

WELLBEING SERVICES

90

Individuals
supported with
financial wellbeing

88

Individuals
supported with 1 to 1
counselling

151

Individuals
supported with
groups and courses

WELLBEING HUB

One of the largest projects to take place in the life of the Bridge started on site January 2023 as we undertook a refurbishment of our ground floor at our Wellbeing Hub. Given the demand for our work in the community we wanted to ensure that we had the facilities in which to offer our wellbeing services as well as supporting other organisations who do similar work.

The refurbishment ensured that we now have the following:



5, 1 to 1 client rooms



Training room



High quality kitchen facilities



Air source heat pump, 20kwh
solar & battery system,
insulation and LED lighting





the bridge
financial wellbeing service

Our Financial Wellbeing team have been able to support **90** individuals in a person centred way to improve their financial Wellbeing. We worked predominately with those who live in **rural areas** and those who present with **mental health** conditions.

90

Individuals supported

150

Support Interventions

402k

Debt Supported

Our impact has ensured that clients:



are less stressed



keep on top of finances



have improved mental wellbeing



more money per month (+ £27)



are more connected to their community



have less debt

PRACTICAL SUPPORT

We also provide clients with vital practical support

✓ 1 to 1 cooking & recipe bags



- ✓ Budgeting packs and 1 to 1 advice
- ✓ Aldi Vouchers & Energy top ups
- ✓ Signposting for emergency support
- ✓ volunteer opportunities and community connection
- ✓ Support with appointments
- ✓ Small community grants
- ✓ Support with warm home discounts

“

Thank you all again for your support, me n the boys are just in a better place all round and really feel that we are getting back on our feet.

”

“

The Bridge has helped me budget in a better/more organised way.

”

“

Brought me hope for the future & less stress coping with family debt.

”

“

Thank you again so much for today's cooking lesson, what a great time I had. Here are some photos of me making macaroni cheese.

”



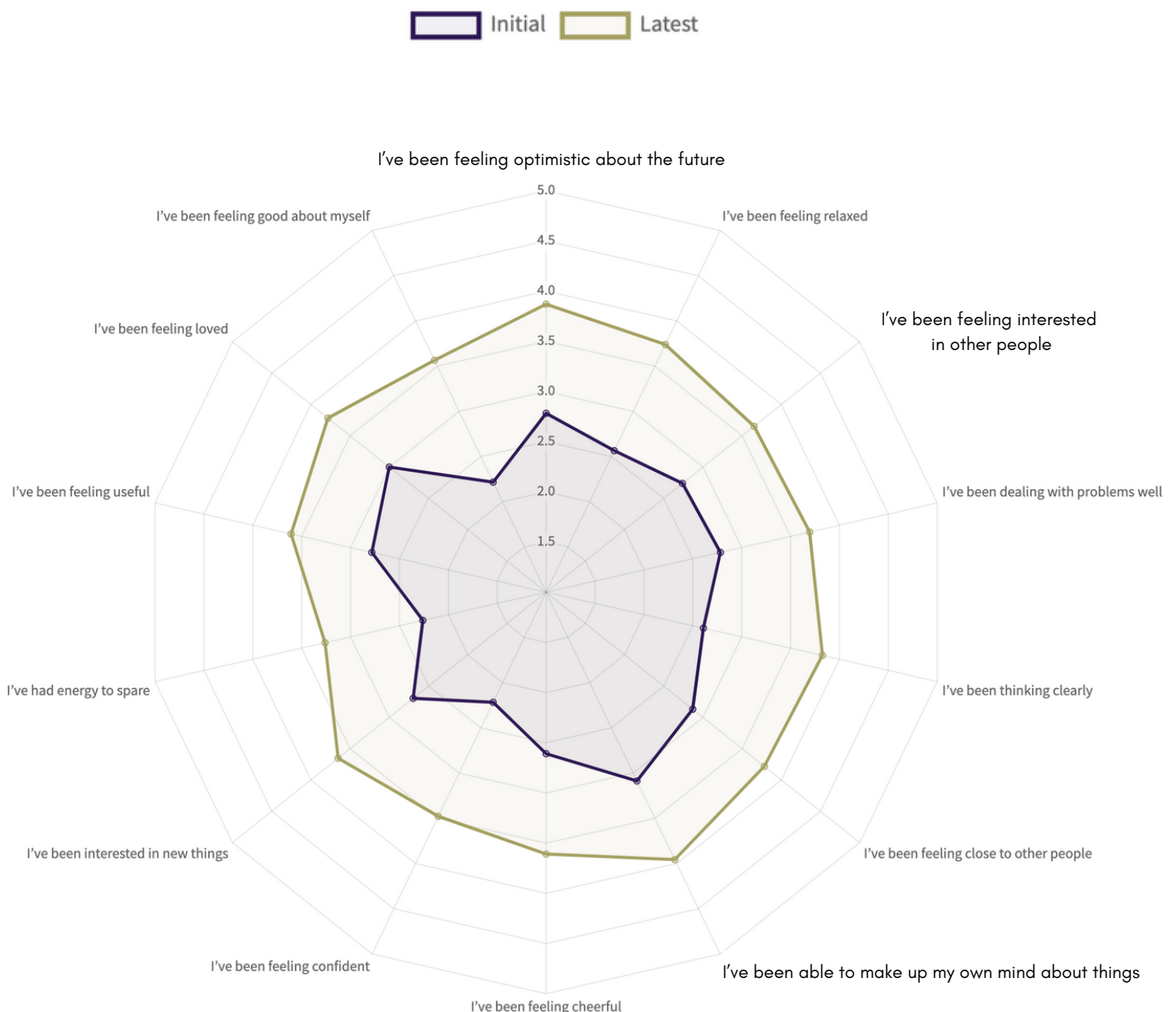
the bridge
counselling service

Our Counselling team have been able to support **88** individuals to improve their emotional wellbeing while offering **861** counselling sessions. Our service provides affordable mental health support in a safe environment.

The most common presenting issues are

TRAUMA ANXIETY DEPRESSION BEREAVEMENT SUICIDAL IDEATION

We used the Warwick Edinburgh Evaluation tool to measure a clients response before and after counselling. The results give a clear visual representation of the impact made.



92% of clients indicated an increase in their ability to cope more emotionally

78% of clients indicated an increase in being able to understand their own life circumstances

78% of clients indicated an increase in their resilience

74% of clients indicated an increase in their self esteem

“

I am better at self-care, less inclined to 'rescue' people, tried new things, and basically saved myself from falling apart during major 'life events' that happened simultaneously. By talking it out instead of bottling up my emotions, has helped.

”

“

I was experiencing burnout, through managing so many different life stressors such as an intense career, unhealthy relationships and people I care for. I was scared that I was going to lose everything I had worked so hard for, or not reach my long-term goals. Through counselling, I recognised how difficult my situation was, and started to bring about necessary changes to alleviate some stress. Now, I feel motivated, have a long-term vision back, believe in myself again, and feel I can manage my situation better. I'm excited about what the future holds for me, and I appreciate how the counsellor helped me through this difficult period in my life.

”



Our Stepping Stones to Wellbeing team have been able to support **151** individuals to improve their financial and emotional wellbeing through offering **23** groups and courses across the past year.



LOOKING AFTER YOUR MENTAL WELLBEING

5 groups completed



EMOTIONAL LIFEJACKET COURSE

7 groups completed



SHARING SKILLS FOR LIFE

2 groups completed



BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT COURSE

9 courses completed

During this year, we have also been developing additional areas of our service and this has been participant led. We are currently in the process of launching the following:



A new course called **Anxiety Matters**. A three week course focused on exploring anxiety and how it can affect thoughts, feelings and behaviours.



A participant led monthly drop-in for all previous and current course participants called **Stepping Stones Connections**.



I had never attended a group course before and was a bit apprehensive about joining. Our group seemed to connect quite easily and by the second session I felt comfortable enough to share my story. Sarah was excellent at drawing out thoughts and expanding on them. The course has been a very positive experience for me and I'll continue to monitor the 'ingredients' in my jars. Thank you



The course has given me the confidence to continue to look for help and support to improve my mental health and not to be afraid to be open with my own challenges



STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS



Over the past year we have been able to increase our staff and volunteer teams across services thanks to some additional funding.

Our volunteers gave an incredible **3,700** hours of time to our work in the past year, supporting clients across our 3 services.

We also said goodbye to some staff members:

Lesley, our Financial Wellbeing Manager, moved onto a new role after being with us for 6 years. Lesley has been key in developing the Financial Wellbeing service and we will miss her greatly.

Carole and Yvonne were employed on a one year contract to support the growth of our counselling service. We thank both for all their work and we are delighted that both have decided to stay on in a voluntary capacity.

PARTNERSHIPS



In early 2020 mental health focussed Third Sector organisations gathered to proactively ensure that access to their services was achievable through a single point of entry for clients.

This led to the creation of West Lothian Wellbeing and in 2022 the service found a new home at the Bridge Community Project where it will be managed on behalf of the 20 other organisations.

During the year the project supported over 100 people.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

As the Bridge looks to its future, we are seeking to diversify our income streams. This began last year with the creation of Counselling West Lothian, a community of trusted counsellors who are based in West Lothian and who are vetted by us.



Over the past year the number of counsellors signed up has grown to **9**. We hope to grow this number further as we settle into our refurbished Wellbeing Hub.

Moving into our new financial year we will be starting to increase the usage of the Wellbeing Hub, developing a business plan for delivering Employee Assistance work and exploring options around delivering training locally.