

# YOUNG ADULT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Young adults shaping their mental health together - local, peer led, and recovery focused.



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# About Mental Health Matters project

The Mental Health Matters project has been created by Lanarkshire Links which is a member and peer-led mental health participation and engagement organisation, who puts those with lived experience at the heart of the development of services and support. The Mental Health Matters project will deliver safe, co-produced wellbeing groups and creative opportunities with and for young adults (16–35) across South Lanarkshire. We will ensure the peer-led sessions include a blend of self-management skills, peer connection, and direct pathways into support, should they be needed. The development plan has been created following on from the first few months of groundwork.

The Mental Health Matters project has been funded by the Scottish Government's Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing fund administered by North and South Lanarkshire's TSI's VASLAN and VANL.

The research that provided the rationale for the Mental Health Matters project in Lanarkshire was The Scottish Government's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2023) and the Creating Hope Together suicide prevention plan (2022–2032) which both emphasise the importance of community-based, preventative approaches. These National documents advocate for the model Lanarkshire Links has opted for which is co-produced and inclusive mental health support that address inequalities and empowers individuals.

Young adults across Scotland have experienced a significant decline in mental health especially since the COVID-19 pandemic. The Scottish Health Survey 2022 shows 16-24 and 25-34 age groups have among the highest levels of two or more symptoms of depression (+16%) compared to older age brackets.

In 2022, 17% of 16-24 year olds reported feeling lonely 'most' or 'all of the time' (vs lower percentages in older groups).

The Scottish Government published that the age groups 16-24 and 25-34 show some of the highest prevalence's for ever having attempted suicide. In 2021/22, ~ 10–11% in those age bands reported having ever attempted suicide. This trend has been exacerbated by social isolation, economic uncertainty, and reduced access to traditional support services.

The role builds on Lanarkshire Links' peer-led commitment. The purpose of this role is to:

- Develop, co-ordinate, and deliver wellbeing activities rooted in co-production for young adults in Lanarkshire who have or are experiencing challenges with their mental health due to a variety of contributing factors.
- Engage young adults, especially those who may be at risk of experiencing inequalities, in accessible community and online spaces.
- Strengthen resilience, reduce isolation, and tackle inequalities through peer-led approaches and creative, meaningful engagement.

This approach is consistent with the Scottish Government's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2023), which highlights community-based, person-centred support as a national priority, particularly for young adults transitioning into adulthood.



# Key Objectives (12–24 months)

## 1 Establish Wellbeing Groups

- Deliver regular recovery focused groups for two cohorts: ages 16–24 and 25–35.
- Embed themed wellbeing sessions such as relaxation, self-management, mindfulness, walking group, holistic sessions, and/or art etc.
- Setting personal wellbeing goals and track progress.
- Improve Mental Health and Wellbeing.

## 2 Strengthen Community Engagement

- Consult with young adults quarterly through focus groups, 1:1 discussions, and surveys.
- Partner with at least 5 local organisations (e.g. Young Carers, SAMH, Trust Jack Foundation, Barnardo's, Lanarkshire Rape Crisis) to reach a diverse participant base.

## 3 Build Resources

- Increase awareness of local resources and supports through social media, and use of digital tools.
- Invite speakers in based on what attendees have requested based on their needs, such as employability, colleges etc.
- Support attendees at the wellbeing groups to develop their own internal resources to self manage their mental health.

## 4 Reduce Isolation & Strengthen Resilience

- Involve attendees in the planning and facilitation of group activities, giving a sense of responsibility that aids recovery.
- Deliver creative community projects (e.g. exhibitions, podcasts) to build confidence and community visibility.
- Participants will form sustainable relationships through participation in groups.
- Reduce loneliness and create connectedness.
- Reduce the stigma associated with mental health through peer support.

## 5 Evidence Impact & Sustainability

- Collect quantitative (attendance, survey scores) and qualitative (case studies, creative outputs) data.
- Co-design sustainability options with young adults, exploring volunteer peer leadership and ongoing funding streams.



# Core Responsibilities

These are designed to ensure the Young Adults Development Worker delivers a co-produced, community-based programme that directly addresses young adults' mental health needs

## Programme Delivery



Facilitate weekly or fortnightly wellbeing sessions in locations across Lanarkshire.

## Co-Production



Ensure sessions reflect lived experience by embedding participant feedback in design.

## Outreach & Partnerships



Actively engage with partner organisations and educational institutions to widen reach.

## Digital Engagement



Use social media and online platforms to connect with young adults unable to attend in person.

## Equity & Inclusion



Prioritise engagement with at-risk groups: women, LGBTQ+ young adults, minority ethnic groups, carers, and those facing socio-economic disadvantage.

## Monitoring & Evaluation



Use surveys to measure impact alongside storytelling and creative evaluation.

# Delivery Timeline

## Foundation Stage

Induction and training.  
Partnership mapping and outreach.  
Launch social media engagement and recruitment.  
Online polls asking young adults what they want

## Pilot Phase

Establish first wellbeing groups in two localities.  
Pilot creative wellbeing activities (e.g. mindfulness, art sessions).  
Deliver first creative showcase.  
Collect baseline wellbeing and feedback data.  
Restructure groups if needed.

## Expansion Phase

Scale up the number of localities across Lanarkshire.  
Access Family & Community Centres and Hubs.  
Develop structured peer networks.  
Outreach through social care, GG, CMHT  
Produce interim evaluation report.

## Consolidate & Sustain

Embed co-produced activities into routine delivery.  
Train peer volunteers to co-facilitate groups.  
Publish annual evaluation and co-design sustainability plan with participants.

## Outcomes

### Short-Term

- Increase capacity of existing supports for young adults in the community
- Increased awareness of local mental health supports and willingness to see help
- Young adults report feeling less isolated and more connected.
- Young adults feel included and that services address the issues that they face
- Young adults are more involved and increased motivation in other areas.
- Stronger engagement in group activities
- Participants develop self-management skills (e.g. relaxation, coping strategies).

### Medium-Term

- Young adults report improved wellbeing.
- Increased resilience and confidence among participants.
- Services better aligned with young adults' needs through feedback loops.
- Peer networks become self-sustaining, with volunteer leadership emerging.
- Stronger community resilience with young adults contributing

## Measures of Success

### Quantitative Data

- Mental Health Matters pre/post surveys.
- Attendance information.
- Referrals received and from whom.

### Qualitative Data

- Case studies and storytelling.
- Creative outputs (art, podcasts, exhibitions).
- Partner feedback.
- Journals and reflective logs.
- Feedback from family members/carers to measure the benefit the group has had.
- Follow up in 3-6 months