

BOLSTER COMMUNITY

Get through & get ahead

Community Navigator Pilot

NIHE Homelessness Prevention
Pilot 2020 - 2022
Social Value Report

Charity No 107382 | Company No 655061

Housing
Executive



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Project Context

There are many social, economic and family factors that can result in a household becoming homeless.

Through our family support work we realised many of our participants were at risk of becoming homeless

This pilot project set out to improving the public's understanding of the complex nature of homelessness by

- Identifying particular groups which are at the highest risk of homelessness
- Raising awareness of homelessness to ensure households approaching crisis can access support
- Undertaking pre-crisis intervention, including triage, advice and practical support services
- Preventing recurring homelessness, including ensuring tenancy sustainment is central to preventing repeat homelessness.

Aims of Community Navigator Pilot

1. Build and strengthen multi-disciplinary partnership as we move from the COVID-19 pandemic
2. Provide a single point of contact for stakeholders, agencies and beneficiaries for those most at risk of homelessness
3. Develop awareness of homelessness and the need to build strong inter agency and community alliances as well as undertaking all business /promotion and administrative functions of same.
4. Build relationships to better enable tenancy sustainment and avoid homelessness within the locality
5. Work with and between stakeholder agencies to provide direct practical support to the most vulnerable clients

We are

BOLSTER COMMUNITY

We are a practical, hands-on charity and social enterprise that works alongside individuals, families and communities to improve health and wellbeing. Our uncompromising, people-first approach means we go the extra mile to complement existing services. We have a pro-active, 'can do' attitude to enable people to reach their full potential.



Visit our website or scan the QR code to find out more about our work

Since 2004, we've had the privilege of helping countless individuals reach their full potential. From early years right through to later years, we support and strengthen people facing life's tough challenges.

Bolster Community (previously known as SPACE NI), has grown from a small campaigning organisation in Warrenpoint, to a key third sector agency providing services, support, training and leadership on community development, resilience and well-being.

FAMILY

Family Support Hub
1:1 Home-based Support
Friends Resilience
Incredible Years
Parents Plus Adolescents
Kilkeel SureStart
EISS
Joining the Dots
Star Bites 57

SENIORS

Home2Hospital
Comfortzone

ABILITY

Bolster Buddies
Meet our Makers
Corporate Training
Autism Connect
Being Awesome

What We Did

Activities

With a clear aim of providing improved access to information and solution finding for individuals presenting with the highest risk of homelessness we offered:

1. Triage and 1-1 meetings so participants could have support and resources to navigate better outcomes
2. We worked with participant's on practical issues so they would feel better supported to negotiate housing solutions
3. Support to achieve improved communication with and between relevant stakeholders and agencies
4. Supported improved understanding of participant's responsibilities and thresholds of risk within a tenancy agreement
5. Supported participants to make improved health choices
6. Supported participant's to cope with life challenges and be more prepared to tackle barriers to sustaining tenancies

324 Households

582 People

291 Adults

290 Children

**Bolster Community sourced
£80,900 of financial support**

78 Family hampers

19 Christmas toy hampers

336 vouchers provided for food, health, electricity, clothing or furniture

24 families accessed permanent accommodation

383 accessed benefits checks and financial advice

400 meals to rough sleepers

Targets & Achievements



Food being delivered by local company for distribution to homeless

Exceeding objectives

Throughout both years of the programme, amidst the grip of a global pandemic and lockdowns that made life worse for many of our participants and partners, the project staff and partners continued to deliver and indeed exceed target objectives.

In the first year of the pilot, the aim was to support 30 beneficiaries. By year end almost 200 people had accessed support.

During the second year, in 2021/22, 382 beneficiaries were supported to maintain their tenancy and improve their wellbeing against a target of 100.

Programme evolution

Launching in the midst of a global pandemic led to necessary changes to what was initially envisioned for the hub, which was to be a physical hub where partners met to discuss referrals.

With the onset of Covid and the reduction in some of the partner services the model had to change and the community navigator became responsible for liaising with partner agencies and seeking advice to support service users.

The upshot of this was that partners now had a single point of contact meaning referrals and issues facing beneficiaries were made in a more timely manner rather than waiting for a monthly meeting to discuss potential referrals.

Stakeholders



Critical to the Homelessness Prevention Pilot was the partnership working with third sector organisations and statutory agencies.

12 organisations made referrals to the programme, with 20 other organisations involved in information sharing and signposting.

This pilot has provided a significant opportunity to provide support and improve wider understanding of the complex nature of homelessness to individuals and groups most at risk of homelessness.

In implementing this pilot, we were able to

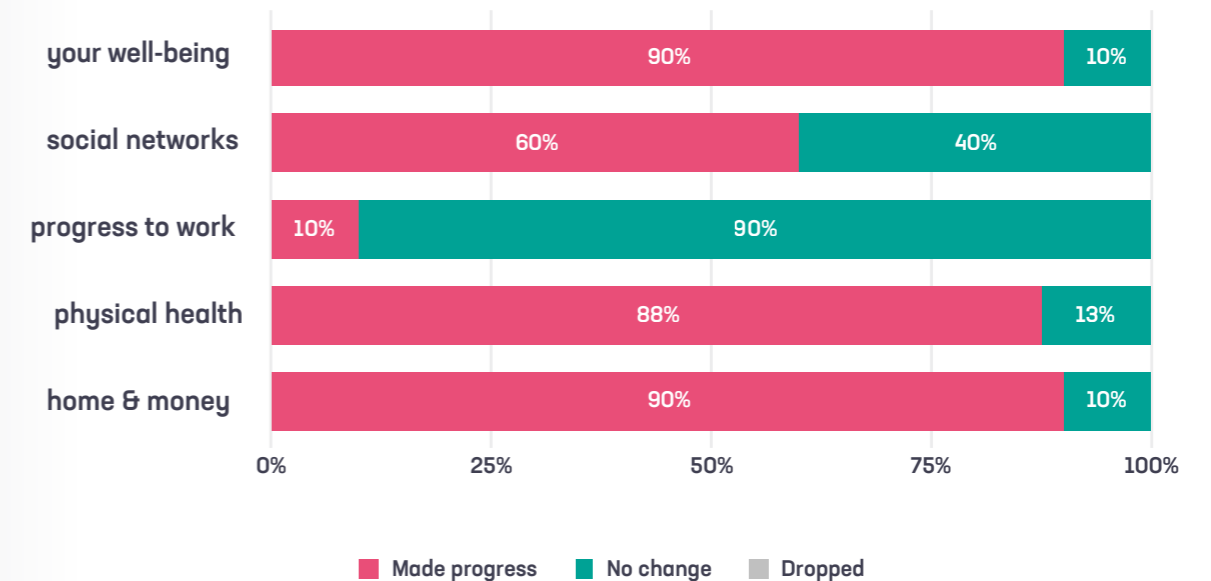
1. Signpost to services
2. Join up resource's
3. Avoid duplication
4. Draw down a range of resources and goodwill which added value
5. Ensure individuals and households approaching crisis accessed critical and timely support

If the Centre had not got assistance from the Bolster Community in these exceptionally challenging months of lockdowns and Covid infection, many migrant families would have ended up living in the street or squatting in two or three families on a single property.

Newry and Mourne Ethnic Minorities Support Centre, NMDDC

Outcomes & Social Value

Family Star Plus: Progress



The Bolster Community Hub: Homelessness Prevention Pilot utilised Outcome Star™ (The Family Star Plus) a practitioner based tool which enables conversation and family plans to be developed.

The results from a representative sample of beneficiaries demonstrated meaningful change in the issues of:

Well-being

Social networks

Physical health

Home & Money

Outcomes & Social Value



Social Value

Based on the outcomes data from the Family Star Plus and the outputs collated by the Bolster team an independent Social Value assessment was completed by SCC Impact using the Social Value Engine (SVE). The SVE is accredited by Social Value UK incorporating Social Return on Investment (SROI) and the 7 Social Value principles.

Outcomes and the related social value can be mapped to the 5 UN Sustainable Development Goals opposite

1. No Poverty	£982,584
3. Good Health & Wellbeing	£845,028
8. Decent Work & Economic Growth	£55,770
10. Reduced Inequalities	£120,771
11. Sustainable Communities	£239,301



Outcomes & Social Value

Outcomes

Families (Adults)

- Maintained tenancy
- Financially better off
- Improved wellbeing
- Improved physical health
- Improved community engagement
- Improved access to employment, training and education
- Access to holistic wraparound service that looked at the whole family needs

Children & Young People

- Improved wellbeing
- Improved community engagement
- Improved access to education
- Strengthened connections with and between children and community activities
- Provided improved cultural understanding with and between young people and their community

Minority families

Support to gain settled status

- 26 families (86 individuals) were aided in achieving their settled status
- Employability & Access to education
- Individual support to access additional services and resources

Partners - Collaboration

- Of the 12 referral partner organisations the two main providers of NIHE & Ethnic Minority Centre are included in the analysis
- Signposting between partners and wider services
- Sharing of resources avoided duplication of services
- Goodwill between partners brought added value to the project
- Ensured individuals facing crisis were able to access critical and timely support

Families & Households



Outcomes experienced by families:

- Maintained tenancy
- Financially better off
- Improved physical health
- Employability & Access to education
- Improved wellbeing
- Improved community engagement

Adults

Benefited from a Social Value of

£1,943,044

>86% of total Social Value created

Children & Young People

Benefited from a Social Value of

£296,870

>13% of total Social Value



Gemma, Jena and Joanne were staff involved in the delivery of the project

I moved to NI from the Middle East 10 years ago. I live with my aunt and my young son. With Gemma's support myself and my family have been able to avoid homelessness.

I found myself in a lot of arrears. Gemma was able to communicate with the various services on my behalf, this was very helpful as my English language skills are limited.

With Gemma's support I was able to come to an agreement on arrears repayments and thankfully this has avoided eviction. Gemma continues to liaise with services on my behalf to improve my quality of life and regularly delivers food packages to support me financially.

I am forever grateful to Jena and the Bolster Community for everything they have done for me and my family over the past few months. They have been a God send.

If Bolster Community hadn't of worked with us my son would not have been living here now as I could not have gone through another year like the last one. With their support we now communicate better, I adapted a calmer parenting approach and my son is getting support with his issues.



Joanne Carragher Community Navigator at the launch of the Star Bites 57 Social Kitchen a new NIHE Sustaining Tenancys funded project

Outcomes & Social Value

Minority Ethnic Community

26 families (86 individuals) were aided in achieving their settled status allowing them improved access to community facilities & services

Such outcomes were possible due to the unique partnership working with the Ethnic Minority Advice Centre. Having identified the grave risk of homelessness to parents and children who have not completed the EU Settlement registration, a partnership agreement was developed to ensure BAME families at risk of homelessness were supported with:

- The application process for Universal Credits
- registering for EU Settlement Status

Many BAME families were unable to access IT, interpretation or support to complete EU resettlement status registration, with job centres closed during lockdown.

Social Value of
£120,770

Settled Status: As the Brexit deadline passed EU, EEA and Swiss Citizens living in Northern Ireland had to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme for status to allow them to remain living here. After June 2021 anyone not registered with the scheme became unlawfully present and were at risk of losing access to employment, benefits, restrictions on accessing housing, education and healthcare and in some instances at risk of Home Office Enforcement action.

It was imperative that these families were supported through this process as many struggled with computer literacy and accessing interpreters to support them through the process.



Outcomes & Social Value

Project Partners

Working collaboratively with a range of community and statutory partners Bolster received referrals from 12 organisations.

The two main partners (NIHE & Ethnic Minority Centre) are included in the analysis with the outcome of improved collaboration building a stronger community and voluntary sector.



Social Value of

£3,540

<1% of the total Social Value created

We would like to acknowledge all supporters and partners of this project: NM&DDC Ethnic Minorities Support Centre; NIHE Housing Solutions Team; NM&DDC Community Support Partnership; Southern Health & Social Care Trust; Newry & Mourne Community Advice; Jobs & Benefits; Newry & Mourne Family Support Hub; and local businesses.

Connecting with the Bolster Project means that we save time trying to tease out potential community support and can focus on other duties like assessing and managing our caseloads. Liaising with Bolster, as a Team in the Housing Solutions Department they have introduced us to a number of other services which we were unaware of and can pass this information to our staff, settled and new clients.

CASE STUDY

She found the thought of the form-filling too daunting and she just would “have buried her head in the sand”.

Referral received for a single mother of 3 children. Struggling to find a new home due to issues in her current house she had literacy problems and fears that being unable to complete the relevant forms on time, and prevent her gaining new accommodation.

She suffers from underlying health issues as a result of having had a hysterectomy and has to attend regular appointments. She also feels this adds to her anxiety levels, leaving it more difficult to deal with looking after her youngest son who also has many underlying health issues -which involves many hospital appointments and doctor visits. After regular one-to-one visits and assistance with budgeting and addressing outstanding bills, the HPN also guided the client through application forms of new tenancy, new GP, new school, etc.

She stated that only for this help she feels she wouldn't have successfully gained new accommodation as she found the thought of the form-filling too daunting and she just would “have buried her head in the sand”.

CASE STUDY

Further to the training, one of the mum’s expressed that it is only now that she realises her son was perfectly “normal” and it was her reactions that was causing the family rows.

Two families were referred to us because relationships with their teens (16/17yr olds) were fractured and parents had threatened to evict them. The Community navigator engaged with both families and began to work to support improved relationships in the homes.

Accessing additional support from Bolster Community’s Family Support Service, the Navigator and Family Support workers helped parents and teens establish shared boundaries.

As an unexpected outcome one parent engaged with a recommended Parenting programmes provided by Bolster Community. Further to the training, she told us that it is only now that she realises her son was perfectly “normal” and it was her reactions that was causing the family rows. She stated the relationship between her and her son are now better than they have ever been. In both instances the risk of eviction dissipated and families continue to be open for support and guidance.

With ‘family breakdown’ being the most prominent reason for presenting as homeless in NI, these were particularly important interventions and outcomes.

CASE STUDY

This ongoing support has worked very well for this tenant who is currently in a much better place socially and emotionally.

Referral received from Community Advice Newry and Mourne for a 42-year-old lady suffering with alcoholism and isolates herself in her flat. The Navigator attempted contact with the client, but she would only engage with phone contact and was adamant not to have any visitors to her flat. She always sounded very weepy and weak on the phone, but always adamant for no house-calls.

The Navigator developed a relationship with the lady over many weeks and eventually gained access to the flat, at this point a relationship of trust developed and the Navigator was able to assist with budgeting, getting electricity/ fuel and essentials for the flat, making it more homely and inviting for when her daughter came to stay.

One weekend the navigator received a text message from the tenant stating she had taken an overdose. Following Bolster policy, the navigator called emergency services and maintained contact until help arrived, the lady was admitted to hospital where she remained for a week. On her release the navigator assisted with a new tenancy and maintains regular contact. This ongoing support has worked very well for this tenant who is currently in a much better place socially and emotionally. She has agreed to be a volunteer at our social kitchen, which will give her more structure to her day and help to widen her social connections.

Conclusions

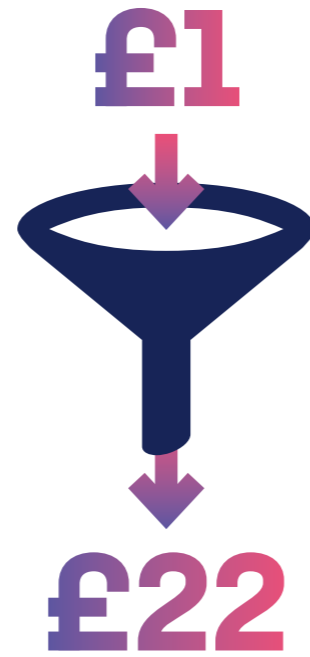
“The Homelessness Prevention pilot represents significant value for money with a SROI ratio of £22 for every £1 invested.

This positive ratio is derived as a result of the significant overachievement of targets - reaching and supporting 579 individuals many with intensive long term support.

“The Homelessness Prevention pilot represents significant value for money with a SROI ratio of £22 for every £1 invested.”

If the programme were to continue it must retain the strong community led partnership that Bolster delivered. Moreover, the continued specialist support to newcomer families is essential as this demographic continues to grow. Finally, the fact that Bolster are so well embedded in the community with links to additional services that provide added value is critical.”

Stephen McGarry, SCC Impact Business Consultants



B°LSTER COMMUNITY

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Connect with us

