



IMPACT REPORT

2025-26

Company Limited by Guarantee Registered in
England & Wales No: 3537038
and a Registered Charity (England & Wales) No:
1069838.

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THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS



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**Foundation
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About Us

Mission Statement

Erewash Voluntary Action CVS works towards a caring and more inclusive society that responds to local community needs and wishes.

Strategic Aims

During the year our work has been delivered under four strategic aims.

These were: -

- 1) To support and build capacity in local community and voluntary organisations (Third Sector or Civil Sector)
- 2) To promote and develop volunteering
- 3) To represent the interests of the Third Sector as widely as possible
- 4) To deliver specific projects that support local activity



What We Do

We are the cornerstone of the community and a single-access point for all local VCSE sector groups, volunteers and partners to access advice and support. All CVS' support, promote and develop local voluntary and community action through the following five key functions:

1) Services and Support

EVA promote the effectiveness of local voluntary and community groups by providing them with a range of services. These may include access to basic facilities, such as meeting rooms, photocopiers and ICT equipment or more involved services such as community accountancy and employment advice. We also support local groups and volunteers through regular newsletters, training, funding advice, and specialist services.

2) Liaison

As a focal point for the local voluntary and community sector, EVA encourages networking between individuals and groups within the sector, and between local groups and the statutory sectors. This allows local groups to learn from one another, establish contacts and work more effectively. We also help different communities to organise their own networking activities.

What We Do

3) Representation

With government encouraging involvement of voluntary and community groups in shaping and delivering services, EVA enables the views of local groups and volunteers to be represented. For example, we run voluntary and community sector forums which provide an opportunity for local groups and volunteers to put forward their views on national and local policies.

4) Development Work

Over the years, the local voluntary and community sector has pioneered some of the essential public services that we now take for granted. Child protection and care for the elderly, for example, had their origins in, and were developed by, the voluntary sector. This tradition has continued into the 21st century, and today CVS organisations take the lead in identifying gaps in service provision and work with groups to develop new and innovative services to meet these needs.



What We Do

5) Strategic Partnerships

EVA works in partnership with local government and other statutory agencies to shape the delivery of services. We play a key role in empowering local groups and volunteers to take part in partnerships and are directly involved in a wide range of regeneration, neighbourhood renewal, health and social care, learning and other government initiatives. Strategic partnerships may be sub-regional, district-wide or neighbourhood. They may cover several issues or have a particular focus.



Impact by Numbers

Key Focus Areas



Sustainability



Impact



Community Wellness

2025/26 at a Glance

1799

Groups and organisations in database

£193k

Amount of funding awarded to local groups

12,130

Number of enquiries received

170%

Average engagement increase across all social media platforms

116

Number of forums, partnerships and strategic meetings attended.

1564

Individuals signposted for support

Impact by Numbers

Community Development

1799

Number of groups/organisations in EVA databases

114

Different groups supported on a 121 basis

16

E-Bulletins/newsletters distributed

22

New groups set up

520

Number of Groups/Organisations directly signposted to provision

18

Successful funding applications completed on behalf of groups

Volunteering

130

Direct service Volunteers at EVA

175

External volunteers supported

37

Number of events attended

40

Number of training courses delivered to volunteers

119

Number of volunteers placed within the VCSE sector

129

Number of organisations supported to offer volunteer opportunities

Impact by Numbers

Social Prescribing

1517

Referrals received

33%

Referrals asked for support in tackling social isolation

48

Children and young people groups delivered

304.4

Kilometres walked by attendees of Accessible Walking group.

4

6 weekly 'live well with pain' sessions delivered.

48

Pain support cafes delivered

Mental Health

254

E-bulletins shared

800+

Enquiries Received

437

Derbyshire Mental Health Forum subscribers

15

Mental Health First Aid lounges delivered

127%

Increase in social media connections

30+

Community events attended

Impact Stories

Sound as a pound, become friends already, look forward to my visits.

Have great chats about the past and how I have survived so long. My volunteer is very friendly and supportive. I feel less lonely and look forward to it.

Super support, talk through family issues. Great laugh, very supportive, will do anything to help

Mum really looks forward to her volunteer visit. She sees her as a friend and is relaxed and happy when she comes. I just want to say that I struggle to get to drink. But volunteer manages it

Impact Stories

Once becoming involved in this initiative, I have been truly encouraged by the response from the staff team. Their approach has been consistently supportive, open, and solution focused. Colleagues have shown genuine care not only for the wellbeing of the children we support, but also for one another as professionals working in a challenging and emotionally demanding field.

Throughout the discussions, Izzy and the staff team have contributed thoughtful ideas, shared experiences honestly, and demonstrated a strong commitment to creating a safe, compassionate, and proactive environment around mental health. This level of engagement reflects the positive culture within [our organisation] and gives confidence that the action plan will be meaningful, practical, and successfully implemented,

Impact Stories

Brings a smile to my face, talks about past, on same wavelength, never have trouble talking, learning new facts

We share anecdotes and opinions on a variety of topics which I find quite stimulating. We also have similar tastes in music and discuss and listen to music together



Impact Stories

Well, what can I say – [this day] will stay with me for a long time! The first ever 'Football, Friends & Memories' event took place at Chesterfield FC. Many months in the planning - the event was amazing!

Football should be unforgettable, but sadly for thousands of fans with dementia, that isn't the case.

We set out with a simple idea, which was to bring back those treasured memories of going to football with loved ones... the excitement, the songs, the laughter. And yesterday, through the power of football, we did exactly that! It wasn't just about football - it was about connection, and holding on to the moments that matter most.

Through Football, we've brought new Friends together, and created an abundance of Memories - to last a lifetime. It has to be one of the most special events I've ever been part of - and I've been proud to be able to deliver this, with the help and support of a fabulous FF&M Project Team.

Together we made this happen

A huge, heartfelt thank you to all of the partners and supporters who have helped to bring this to life!

Impact Stories

I am grateful for the teamwork, professionalism, and empathy shown by everyone involved, and I look forward to continuing this important work together to strengthen our support for both young people and staff wellbeing

My client is a lovely lady and I thoroughly enjoy visiting her and talking with her. She has such a wonderful sense of humour. It gives me a great opportunity to use my active listening and empathy skills and hopefully give her a sense of being listened to, with no judgment-just a friendly face for her to chat with. I feel very lucky to get the chance to visit her and feel it enhances my life to by broadening my horizons

Seeing their smile when they open the door knowing it maybe the only one they see that day and that it helps to have someone to chat too and becoming friends

Community Development

Community Development: Building Stronger Communities

At EVA, community development is about bringing people, organisations and communities together to create lasting, positive change. We support local voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations to thrive by strengthening their capacity, encouraging collaboration, increasing access to funding and ensuring community voices influence local decision-making.

Throughout 2025/26, our Community Development Team remained the first point of contact for hundreds of enquiries from community groups, charities, residents and businesses seeking advice, guidance and connections. Whether helping a new group become constituted, supporting an organisation to recruit volunteers, promoting local events, or providing one-to-one funding support, our aim has been to ensure community organisations have the tools they need to succeed.

Supporting a Stronger Voluntary Sector



Community Development

This year we worked alongside organisations of all sizes, providing practical support to help them develop, become more sustainable and increase the services they offer to local people. Our support included:

- One-to-one development advice and mentoring.
- Guidance on governance, constitutions and policies.
- Funding advice and application support.
- Volunteer recruitment and promotion.
- Networking and partnership opportunities.
- Promotion of community activities through our communications.

Many organisations secured new funding to expand existing projects or launch new initiatives, while others benefited from practical advice that enabled them to strengthen their governance, increase their visibility and build stronger volunteer teams.



Community Development

Investing in Communities

Securing investment into Erewash's voluntary sector remains one of our key priorities. We actively promote funding opportunities, work with funders and partners to encourage investment into local organisations and advocate for existing community groups to be recognised as the solution to local needs wherever possible.

By supporting established organisations rather than creating duplicate services, investment delivers greater value, strengthens existing community assets and creates more sustainable outcomes for local residents.

Keeping Communities Connected

Communication is central to everything we do. Our regular funding bulletins, newsletters and e-bulletins continue to grow in reach and are shaped by feedback from our subscribers. They provide up-to-date information on funding opportunities, training, volunteering, local events and news from across the VCSE sector.



Community Development

We also continue to facilitate networking opportunities that enable organisations to learn from one another, develop partnerships and connect with regional and county-wide initiatives. These relationships help bring new ideas, resources and opportunities back into Erewash.

Listening to feedback has remained a priority throughout the year. By strengthening our feedback processes, we have continued to improve our network meetings, communications and services, ensuring they remain relevant to the needs of local organisations.

Supporting Our Members

Our membership offer continued to evolve throughout the year, responding directly to what local organisations told us they need. Members benefit from access to specialist advice, funding information, networking opportunities, training, promotion and representation, helping them become more resilient and better equipped to support their communities.

Looking Ahead

Strong communities are built through collaboration. By connecting organisations, encouraging partnership working and championing the incredible work taking place across Erewash, EVA continues to play a vital role in creating a thriving, resilient voluntary sector.

Together with our members, volunteers, partners and funders, we are helping ensure that communities across Erewash remain connected, supported and empowered to make a lasting difference.

Community Development

Case Study 1: Creating Connections Through Our Community Warm Space

At Erewash Voluntary Action, we know that community development is about far more than providing a service – it's about creating opportunities for people to connect, support one another and feel part of their community.

Through our Warm and Welcoming Space at Granville Avenue, we welcomed between 10 and 16 people each week, with attendance exceeding 50 visitors during a special community event. While many people initially came for a warm, welcoming environment and free refreshments, they stayed because of the friendships and sense of belonging they found.

One visitor arrived one week expecting to meet a friend they had made through the sessions. When their friend did not arrive, they immediately phoned to check they were safe and well. What had started as a simple drop-in had become a genuine support network, demonstrating how meaningful relationships can develop when people have regular opportunities to come together.



Community Development

Case Study 1: Creating Connections Through Our Community Warm Space

Another regular attendee initially lacked confidence and rarely spoke to others. As the weeks progressed, they became increasingly comfortable within the group and began helping to make drinks for other visitors. This small act of volunteering reflected a significant increase in confidence and highlighted how supportive community environments can empower people to contribute and feel valued.

The Warm Space became much more than somewhere to keep warm. It reduced loneliness, encouraged volunteering, built confidence and created lasting friendships. Conversations ranged from hobbies and travel to volunteering opportunities and social prescribing, enabling people to share experiences, advice and encouragement in a relaxed environment. These everyday interactions demonstrate the lasting impact that community development can have on people's wellbeing and resilience.



Community Development

Case Study 2: Small Grants Creating Big Opportunities

One of the many ways Erewash Voluntary Action strengthens local communities is through the Erewash Small Grant Scheme, providing grassroots organisations with the resources they need to respond to local challenges.

In 2025, Canaan Trust received a £1,500 Small Grant to purchase three laptops to support people experiencing homelessness and digital exclusion. The funding enabled the charity to expand its digital skills programme, helping residents and community clients access online services, education, employment opportunities and essential support. Over the year, the project supported 52 people through weekly digital skills sessions, alongside 27 people receiving tailored one-to-one support.

“The computers enabled staff to work 1 to 1 with Community based clients supporting them to address their digital isolation. Clients were enabled to address issues relating to their benefits, rent arrears, historical debt, attain employment training as well as access to employment and volunteering”.



Erewash Voluntary Action are supporting the
Canaan Trust with their
Christmas Reverse Advent Calendar Appeal

Please donate to the Canaan Trust appeal and help make this
Christmas a little better for those who are struggling.

Cereals, pasta sauce, curry sauce, tin beans, tin spaghetti, tin chilli, tin meat / meat pies, corned beef, tin tuna, tin carrots, tin peas, tin potatoes, tin ravioli, bolognese, tin tomatoes, tin rice pudding, tin fruit, custard, fruit squash, tea, instant coffee, hot chocolate, jam, peanut butter, ketchup, brown sauce, cup-a-soup, tin soup, toiletries, toothpaste, shampoo, disposable razors, shaving foam, shower gel, baby wipes, deodorant, hand sanitiser, socks, underwear, biscuits, chocolate, mints.



We will be accepting donations at our office on
Granville Avenue, Long Eaton, NG10 4HD
up until 13th December from 9am - 2.30pm daily.

We will then deliver to Canaan Trust the following week.



Community Development

Case Study 2: Small Grants Creating Big Opportunities

One young man arrived at Canaan Trust after becoming homeless following a family breakdown. Living with autism and experiencing significant social isolation, he struggled to manage his online benefits account, resulting in financial sanctions and increasing anxiety. Through access to a laptop and personalised digital skills support, he learned to manage his online journal, created his first CV and successfully applied for a volunteering role. As a result, his financial situation stabilised, his confidence grew and he began building friendships through volunteering, reducing his isolation and improving his wellbeing.

The grant also enabled people to reconnect with education, secure housing, improve digital confidence and access employment opportunities. By investing in local organisations that understand the needs of their communities, EVA's Small Grant Scheme continues to create lasting change, tackling health inequalities, improving resilience and helping people build brighter futures.



Volunteering

What We Do:

For over four decades, our Volunteer Centre has been at the heart of our community— connecting people who want to make a difference with the organisations that need their skills, time and passion.

As a Volunteer Centre, we play a vital role in strengthening local volunteering through six core functions. We connect individuals and groups to meaningful volunteering opportunities, promote volunteering across the community, and support organisations to adopt best practice in working with volunteers. We develop new and inclusive opportunities by partnering with statutory, voluntary, private, faith and community groups, ensuring everyone can contribute.

We also champion the volunteer voice — responding to policy, leading campaigns, and advocating for a volunteer-friendly environment. Finally, we use our local expertise to influence strategic planning regionally and nationally.

Together, these functions enable us to unlock the potential of volunteers and build a stronger, more connected community.



Volunteering

Highlights of the year:

- Erewash Community celebration event – to celebrate National Volunteers week. It was bigger and better than last year and the rain didn't stop us! We implemented 'Plan B' and took the event inside mainly. It was a highly attended event and such a wonderful fun filled day with entertainment, stalls, BBQ community spirit. We even held our first Erewash Voluntary Action Awards. A huge Thank you to Long Eaton Rugby Club for hosting us and looking forward to next year.
 - 18-30's group has grown! The group launched in partnership with Rethink/DRPSS in April 2025 has gone from strength to strength. They've even added on another hour.
 - The beginning of 2026 saw the launch of our Ilkeston Volunteer Coffee Morning. We felt it beneficial to support our volunteers (and those interested in volunteering) living in Ilkeston that they have a local space to catch up with us. This is held every 1st Wednesday of the month at Direct Help & Advice (opposite the coffee bean café). Our Long Eaton Coffee morning continues to run every 3rd Monday of the month. Both are drop-in sessions and no need to book.
-

Volunteering

Highlights of the year:

- Community Engagement across Erewash – We continued to take part in a number of local events across 2025 and 2026 to champion volunteering. Just some of the events we've attended were Long Eaton Carnival, Everyone Eats Family Fun Day, Derbyshire Adult Community Learning Service's 16-24 volunteering event, Derby University's part-time and Volunteering Fair, Community Information Day at West Park Leisure Centre, Erewash's Social Prescribing events and the Ilkeston Heritage Car Show.
- Presentation and Outreach – our volunteer centre have been invited to several organisations to champion volunteering across the region. Some of these include, Brackenfield SEND, Nottingham CVS' 150 celebration event and Derbyshire Adult Community Learning service.
- Training – in partnership with Derbyshire Adult Community Learning service, we've hosted several awareness workshops for community volunteers. Sessions have included Dementia Awareness, 1st Aid Awareness, and IT basics. We have a new session coming in August – Hearing Loss Awareness.



Community Wellbeing

Supporting healthier,
happier communities across Erewash



Volunteering

Highlights of the year:

- Growing our volunteer community - Our quarterly Erewash Community Network continues to grow, with new members joining throughout the year and a range of insightful guest speakers sharing their expertise and services. Our Direct Services remain a vital community asset. We have continued to support residents with our Erewash Shopping Service, our Hobby Buddy Befriending Service, and our Wellbeing & Advice Service at Lacemaker Court Residential Complex in Long Eaton—each making a meaningful impact on local residents.
- With the success of new funding from the National Lottery's Reaching communities fund, it's given us the opportunity to explore other ways we could support our Erewash Residents. Keep an eye on our website and socials for more information.



Volunteering

Case Study 1: Restoring Confidence Through Compassionate Support

Helping "DB" Stay Connected and Independent

At 93 years old, "DB" had lived independently for many years with support from our Shopping Service. However, as her eyesight deteriorated due to macular degeneration and a failed cataract operation, everyday life became increasingly difficult. Once able to enjoy walks into town, she gradually became isolated after losing her confidence to leave her home safely. Our team at Lacemaker Court recognised that practical support alone wasn't enough. Through regular wellbeing visits, trusted relationships were built with DB and her family, creating a safe space where she could talk openly about her loneliness, anxiety and feelings of being a burden. We worked closely with her GP, care coordinators and family members to ensure everyone understood her changing needs and could respond appropriately.

With patience and encouragement, DB began joining activities and occasional lunches in the on-site restaurant. These outings, although requiring reassurance, became something she genuinely looked forward to, providing companionship, improving her mood and reducing her sense of isolation.

Volunteering

Case Study 1: Restoring Confidence Through Compassionate Support

The Difference We Made

- Built a trusted relationship that enabled DB to speak openly about her wellbeing.
- Worked alongside health professionals and family to secure additional daily care support.
- Increased opportunities for social interaction, helping reduce loneliness and improve emotional wellbeing.
- Supported DB to remain living independently while ensuring her safety and wellbeing were protected.

"This case reminds us that personalised, relationship-based support can make a life-changing difference. Sometimes the greatest impact comes from simply taking the time to listen, build trust and help someone feel valued again."



Volunteering

Case Study 2: The Power of the Right Volunteer Match

Building Confidence Through Shared Understanding.

Our Hobby Buddy project demonstrates how the right volunteer match can transform lives—not only for the person receiving support but for the volunteer too.

Volunteer "ER" was matched with "LB", who is unable to leave home. Both individuals are autistic, creating an immediate shared understanding that helped build trust and a genuine friendship. ER now visits LB every Tuesday, providing companionship, conversation and a regular connection that LB otherwise wouldn't have.

The partnership has flourished because of their shared experiences and mutual understanding. ER is able to recognise LB's behaviours and communication style, creating a comfortable environment where both individuals feel accepted and understood.



Volunteering

Case Study 2: The Power of the Right Volunteer Match

The Difference We Made

- Reduced social isolation through regular companionship.
- Created a meaningful friendship built on shared lived experience.
- Increased the volunteer's confidence and sense of purpose.
- Demonstrated the importance of carefully matching volunteers and clients to achieve lasting positive outcomes.

"

When we take the time to make the right match, volunteering becomes more than giving time—it creates meaningful relationships that improve confidence, wellbeing and quality of life for everyone involved."



Social Prescribing

Our Year 2025-2026

During the period April 2025 – March 2026, the Social Prescribing Team received 1517 referrals.

Referrals have covered a wide range of needs, including social isolation, loneliness, bereavement, anxiety, and support with lifestyle changes.

Through one-to-one support, the team has been able to take the time to understand what matters most to each individual and identify the most appropriate support for their circumstances. Using a person-centred approach, the team has supported people across Erewash to improve their emotional, mental, and physical health and wellbeing by connecting them with local services, community activities, and support tailored to their needs.

Throughout this period, our Pain Support Cafés have remained well attended and continue to be a valued source of peer support for people living with chronic pain. The cafés provide a welcoming space where individuals can meet others with shared experiences, reduce feelings of isolation, and build meaningful social connections. Many attendees have developed friendships beyond the sessions, arranging to meet socially and providing one another with ongoing encouragement and support.

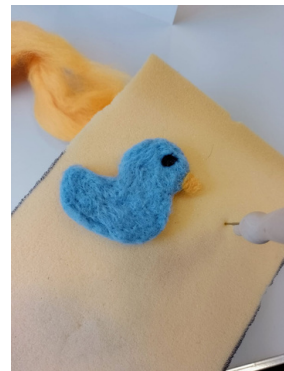
Social Prescribing

Our Year 2025-2026

The Pain Support Cafés have taken place in both Ilkeston and Long Eaton, with a total of 48 sessions delivered during this period.

Alongside the cafés, the team delivered four 'Let's Live Well with Pain' programmes. Each programme, delivered in-person, over a period of six weeks, supports people living with chronic pain to develop practical, non-medical strategies for managing their conditions. Each week explores a different theme, including acceptance, pacing, nutrition, movement, sleep, communication, and connection, helping participants build confidence and develop skills to improve their day-to-day wellbeing.

Many participants who complete the 'Let's Live Well with Pain' programme go on to attend the Pain Support Cafés, enabling them to continue building supportive relationships, reinforce the strategies they have learned, and remain connected to a community of people who understand the challenges of living with chronic pain.



Social Prescribing

Our Year 2025-2026

The Social Prescribing Team has also delivered a weekly 'Accessible Walking Group', providing a supportive and inclusive opportunity for people who may face barriers to improving their physical activity levels. Whether due to long-term health conditions, reduced confidence, or other personal circumstances, participants have been encouraged and supported to increase their activity at a pace that is suitable for them while benefiting from the social connections that come from walking alongside others. The group has helped participants to improve their physical and emotional wellbeing, build confidence, and reduce feelings of isolation.

Recognising the importance of supporting younger members in our community, Social Prescribing has also delivered the 'Children and Young People Group' in both Ilkeston and Long Eaton. Meeting twice monthly, each group has provided a safe and welcoming space for young people experiencing social isolation. Through regular sessions, participants have had opportunities to develop friendships, build confidence, and improve their emotional wellbeing in a supportive environment. The groups have encouraged positive social connections, helped young people recognise and build on their strengths, and enabled them to feel more engaged with their local community.



Celebrating Impact

Recognising the amazing people
and groups making a difference



Social Prescribing

Our Year 2025-2026

In October, the team developed and hosted a 'Winter Wellbeing Event', bringing together local organisations, community groups, and residents to share practical advice, services, and activities that support health and wellbeing during the winter months.

The one-day event featured wellbeing sessions, creative arts activities, information and interactive stalls, and a welcoming café space with healthy refreshments and recipes. The event successfully encouraged people to connect with others, explore local resources, and find practical ways to stay well throughout the winter and beyond.



Social Prescribing

Our Year 2025-2026

In March, BBC East Midlands and other media services featured one of our Social Prescribing clients - sharing his inspirational story and the significant changes he made through engaging with the service. His interview was televised, along with an interview with member of the team.

When he was first referred to Social Prescribing, he was living a more sedentary and unhealthy lifestyle but wanted to make changes. Through one-to-one support, he was able to identify personal goals, access encouragement and guidance, and take steps towards improving his health and wellbeing.

He completely transformed his approach to physical activity and wellbeing. What started with small steps developed into a passion for fitness and running, with him now completing half marathons, raising money for charity, and training towards becoming a Personal Trainer to support and inspire others.



Social Prescribing

Our Year 2025-2026 (cont.)

His story highlights the impact of working alongside someone, setting achievable goals, and how small changes can lead to meaningful and lasting outcomes.

Through person-centred approaches, workshops and groups, community activities, and partnership working, the Social Prescribing Team has helped people across Erewash to overcome barriers, strengthen their connections with others, and to achieve meaningful improvements in their health, wellbeing, and quality of life, and to reach outcomes that truly matter and make a difference to them.



Social Prescribing

Case Study 1

Background

P is an 82-year-old man living alone with osteoarthritis and polymyalgia rheumatica. In July 2025, he was referred to Social Prescribing by his practice pharmacist due to increasing difficulties managing pain and completing activities of daily living.

During an initial home visit, P spoke at length about the significant impact his pain was having on both his physical and mental wellbeing. He also reflected on the loss of his wife eight years earlier and presented with low mood, expressing hope that alternative medication might provide relief from his ongoing pain.

The Support Provided

Recognising the wider impact of P's health condition, Social Prescribing took a holistic approach, addressing both practical and emotional needs alongside pain management.

P was referred for support to claim Attendance Allowance and was signposted to local bereavement support opportunities. Regular follow-up conversations provided space for P to discuss the challenges he was facing and explore a range of non-medical approaches to living with persistent pain.

Social Prescribing

Case Study 1 (cont.)

Over several months, P was introduced to pain support cafés, self-management programmes, and resources focused on understanding and managing chronic pain. Information from arthritis support organisations was shared, alongside guidance on approaches such as pacing activities and acceptance-based pain management.

Initially, P remained focused on finding alternative medication and found it difficult to consider non-medical approaches. However, through ongoing conversations and a personalised pace of support, he gradually became more open to exploring different ways of managing his condition.

As P began to acknowledge the long-term nature of his pain, support also focused on practical measures to improve his independence and quality of life. A face-to-face appointment was arranged to complete a Blue Badge application, and additional support was secured to help him complete his Attendance Allowance claim.

In January, having completed applications for Attendance Allowance and a Blue Badge, it was agreed that his referral to SP could be closed, with the open invitation to refer back to SP for non-medical support if needed.

Social Prescribing

Case Study 1 (cont.)

Outcomes and Impact

In March 2026, P made contact to update that he had successfully been awarded both a Blue Badge and Attendance Allowance.

The practical benefits were significant. P reported that the Blue Badge had made an immense difference to his day-to-day life by improving accessibility and reducing the physical strain associated with travelling and attending appointments. He was also using his Attendance Allowance to fund support with activities of daily living, helping to reduce the impact of pain on everyday tasks.

Perhaps most importantly, there had been a notable shift in P's outlook and relationship with his pain. During a follow-up meeting, he spoke about having come to terms with the reality of living with ongoing pain and described how applying pacing techniques had helped him manage his energy levels and daily activities more effectively.

The improvement in P's overall wellbeing was clear. His mood had improved, he appeared more positive about the future, and he demonstrated greater confidence in managing his condition.

Social Prescribing

Case Study 1 (cont.)

The Difference Social Prescribing Made

P's journey highlights the value of a person-centred, long-term approach to support. Over approximately eight months, Social Prescribing provided eight telephone consultations, three face-to-face meetings and multiple contacts with partner organisations on P's behalf.

Rather than focusing solely on symptom reduction, the support adapted to P's individual needs, allowing him time to reflect on information, revisit conversations, and gradually develop confidence in non-medical approaches to managing persistent pain.

While many Social Prescribing clients do not return to share the longer-term outcomes of their support, P's story demonstrates how sustained, personalised intervention can lead to meaningful improvements in independence, wellbeing and quality of life. His experience shows that even when a health condition cannot be cured, the right support can help people regain control, improve daily functioning and look to the future with greater optimism.



Building a Sustainable Future

Working in partnership to
create lasting change

Social Prescribing

Case Study 2

Background

Following the loss of his wife, the client experienced significant anxiety which impacted many aspects of his daily life. He described feeling as though his world had become much smaller. During his marriage, he had relied heavily on his wife for emotional support, social interaction, attending appointments, shopping, and managing everyday tasks. As his wife's health deteriorated, he left employment to care for her and felt unable to return to work afterwards due to low confidence and ongoing anxiety.

Support Provided

Through person-centred conversations, we explored where he was emotionally and what goals felt realistic and meaningful for him. He identified that he wanted support with coping strategies for his anxiety and hoped to find a small, manageable group where he could take part in an activity without feeling overwhelmed in hope to start increasing his confidence.



Social Prescribing

Case Study 2 (cont.)

The client spoke positively about his long-standing interest in gardening, so he was introduced to a local gardening group that offered a welcoming and supportive environment. This quickly became an important part of his weekly routine and provided structure, social connection, and a sense of purpose. Alongside this, he received ongoing coaching and motivational support from SP, as well as support from mental health support workers. Over time, this helped him build confidence and gradually access more opportunities within his community.

We worked together through his goals, one at a time, tackling public transport, to ordering drinks, to trying new groups on his own.

Outcomes

As his confidence increased, the client began volunteering locally through Hobby Buddies and became more socially engaged. He reported improvements in his confidence when he looked back over the last year. He was able to see how much progress he had made and the challenges he had overcome. Inspired by his own experiences, he developed the idea of creating and running his own anxiety support group.

Social Prescribing

Case Study 2 (cont.)

He noticed there was a gap for this and he felt this would be something that would not only support his own wellbeing and anxiety management, but also help other people in the local area who may be struggling with similar challenges.

Currently, he is in the final stages of setting up his group and as he faces the hurdles of doing this, he continues to grow in confidence.

His journey demonstrates the positive impact of personalised, strengths-based social prescribing support in helping individuals rebuild confidence, reconnect with their community, and regain a sense of purpose following bereavement and poor mental health.



Social Prescribing

Do you have social, emotional or practical concerns and would like some support? Our Social Prescribing Team may be able to help.



Motivation
Supporting you to reach your goals



Signposting & Planning
Supplying you with information for further support and specialist services e.g. housing, finance, employment etc.



Social Isolation
Helping you to find new opportunities within your community



Connections
Making friends and building your support networks



Coping Strategies
Supporting you to find ways to cope with life's challenges



Wellbeing
Taking time to find wellbeing strategies that fits you and your lifestyle



www.erewashvoluntaryaction.org.uk



Mental Health

Strengthening Community Connections

Throughout 2025/26, the Mental Health Team delivered a wide range of activities designed to bring people together, reduce loneliness, and support wellbeing within local communities. From Listening Lounges and wellbeing sessions to community events and countywide initiatives, our work has created opportunities for people to connect, share experiences, and access support.

Key Activities

Hosted 15 in-person and online Listening Lounge Network events for Mental Health First Aiders across Derbyshire, providing those who share their MHFA skills with a welcoming and supportive peer network.

Participated in more than 30 community events, wellbeing activities, and information stalls across the county.

Supported and contributed to a range of local events, including the Long Eaton Carnival, VCSE Community Conference, and Volunteers' Week Celebration Event.



Mental Health

Strengthening Community Connections

Impact

Over the last 12 months, our work has helped make conversations about mental health more visible, accessible, and inclusive. We have strengthened relationships with both statutory and voluntary sector partners, increased awareness of local wellbeing and crisis support services, and created more opportunities for people to engage with their communities.

As a result, more individuals have been encouraged to take part in meaningful activities, build confidence, develop connections, and access support that contributes to positive long-term mental wellbeing.



Mental Health

Training, Skills and Capacity Building

Investing in learning and development remained a key priority throughout 2025/26. Alongside undertaking a range of training opportunities ourselves, the team also promoted and signposted funded learning opportunities to partners and community organisations, helping to build mental health knowledge, confidence, and capacity across Derbyshire.

By continually developing our skills and expertise, we have ensured that staff and volunteers are well equipped to respond to the diverse needs of the communities we support.

Training Completed by the Team:

Mental Health First Aid.
Suicide Awareness.
Dementia Awareness.
Peer Support Worker.
Domestic Abuse Awareness.
Zero Suicide Alliance.

Digital Champions.
Social Isolation and Loneliness.
Bipolar UK E-Learning.
ZSA Supporting A Stranger.
Understanding Autism and Neurodiversity.



MHFA England



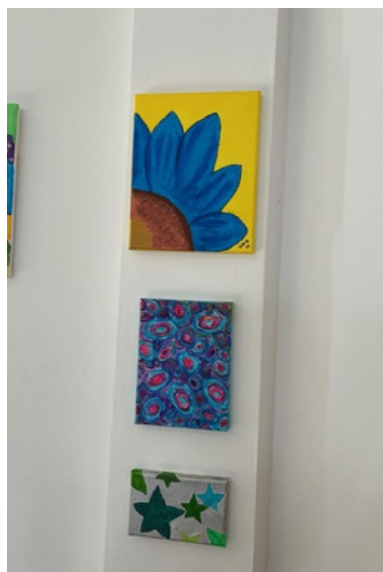
Mental Health

Training, Skills and Capacity Building

Impact

The learning undertaken throughout the year has enhanced our ability to respond effectively to a wide range of mental health needs, engage confidently in conversations about wellbeing, and provide more informed signposting and support. It has also enabled the team to deliver a broader range of activities and sessions, ensuring that support is tailored, relevant, and responsive to the needs of local communities.

By investing in our own development and promoting learning opportunities for others, we are helping to build a more informed, confident, and resilient network of individuals and organisations across Derbyshire.



Mental Health

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Outreach Project

The Derbyshire Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Outreach Project continued to grow throughout 2025/26, reaching its highest levels of activity and engagement since the project began in 2022.

The project supports small businesses, charities, community organisations, sports clubs, and local groups to embed mental health awareness and suicide prevention into everyday practice. By providing practical support, resources, and guidance, the project helps organisations create environments where people feel able to talk openly about mental health and access support when they need it.

During the year, the project strengthened its collaborative approach through joint activities with the Derbyshire Mental Health Friendly Clubs initiative, delivered in partnership with Active Derbyshire, Compass Changing Lives and Derbyshire Mind. This initiative supports sports and physical activity clubs to create safer, more supportive environments where listening, understanding, and wellbeing are at the heart of club culture.



Information & Support

Helping local people, groups
and organisations thrive

Mental Health

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Outreach Project

MHSP Project Outcomes:

- Signposted organisations to free mental health and suicide awareness training opportunities.
- Supported organisations to develop mental health action plans and wellbeing policies.
- Continued the growth and development of the Mental Health First Aider Network.
- Delivered workshops and awareness sessions for teams, youth groups, and community events.
- Increased access to practical resources, signposting information, and guidance across Derbyshire.



Mental Health

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Outreach Project

Impact

Over the past year, the project has helped increase confidence within communities to recognise and respond to the early signs of mental distress. By raising awareness, improving access to training, and strengthening local support networks, the project has contributed to a more proactive approach to mental health and suicide prevention across Derbyshire.

The project has also supported organisations to embed wellbeing into their everyday practice, creating more supportive environments for staff, volunteers, members, and service users. Through strong partnership working and community engagement, we have continued to build lasting relationships that strengthen the county's collective approach to mental health and wellbeing.



Mental Health

Derbyshire Mental Health Forum

Collaboration remained at the heart of the Derbyshire Mental Health Forum throughout 2025/26. The Forum continued to bring together individuals, community groups, voluntary organisations, and statutory partners to share learning, build connections, and strengthen mental health support across Derbyshire.

Through coordinating, hosting, and supporting a wide range of events and networking opportunities, the Forum has played an important role in creating spaces where organisations can collaborate, share best practice, and work together to improve outcomes for local communities.

Main Events Delivered or Supported:

- Derbyshire Mental Health Forum Loneliness Week Network Meeting
- Derbyshire Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Conference
- Meet the Commissioner Event hosted by the Derbyshire Mental Health Forum
- Derbyshire Mental Health Forum Countywide Mental Health Marketplace Event



Mental Health

Derbyshire Mental Health Forum

In addition, the Forum has supported several community wellbeing sessions, as well as information stalls at leisure centres, hospitals, and other community venues.

The Derbyshire Mental Health Forum continues to be a well-established and trusted network for groups and organisations across the county. Over the last 12 months, the Forum shared 254 e-bulletins and engaged with more than 437 regular subscribers, helping to keep members informed about funding opportunities, training, events, resources, and developments within the mental health sector.



Mental Health

Derbyshire Mental Health Forum

Impact

Throughout the year, the Forum has helped increase the visibility and accessibility of mental health support across Derbyshire. By creating opportunities for meaningful collaboration between the voluntary, community and statutory partners, the Forum has strengthened relationships and encouraged a more joined-up approach to supporting mental wellbeing.

The Forum has also provided valuable opportunities for community groups and grassroots organisations to showcase their work, share their expertise, and connect with potential partners. In doing so, it has helped amplify local voices, promote community-led solutions, and contribute to a stronger, more connected mental health network across Derbyshire.



Mental Health

Derbyshire Mental Health Forum

Impact

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Mental Health

Communication and Engagement

Effective communication remains central to the work of the Mental Health Team. Throughout 2025/26, we maintained a strong digital presence, ensuring that partners, community groups, professionals, and members of the public could access timely information, resources, opportunities, and support.

Key Achievements:

- Produced an average of 26 e-bulletins per month through the Derbyshire Mental Health Forum, sharing news, events, funding opportunities, training, and resources.
- Increased the Forum's social media reach significantly, with average connections across our channels growing by 127% during 2025/26.
- Responded to and supported more than 100 requests from groups and organisations.
- Assisted with nearly 800 individual enquiries, providing information, signposting, and support.



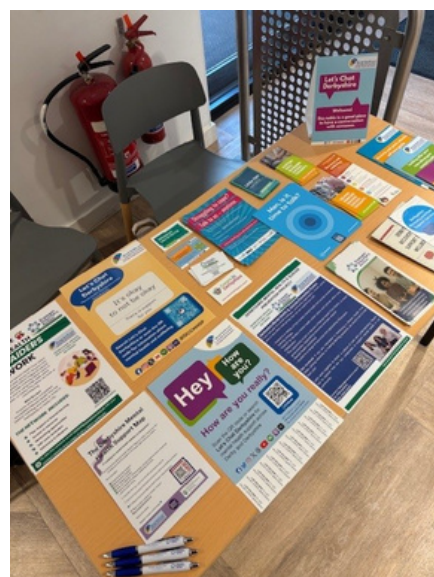
Mental Health

Communication and Engagement

Impact

Our communications activity has helped improve awareness of local mental health services, training opportunities, events, and sources of support across Derbyshire. Through regular engagement with communities and partner organisations, we have strengthened connections, increased access to information, and helped ensure that individuals and organisations can more easily find the support and resources they need.

The significant growth in our digital reach demonstrates increasing engagement with the Forum and highlights the value of trusted, accessible communication in connecting people, organisations, and communities across the county.



Mental Health

Looking Ahead

As we move into 2026/27, the Derbyshire Mental Health Team is excited to build on the successes and partnerships developed over the past year.

A key area of growth will be the launch of a new Erewash Children and Young People's (CYP) Grants Programme in June 2026. This initiative will help local groups to develop and deliver projects that improve mental health and wellbeing for children and young people, empowering the next generation to play an active role in shaping mental health support.

The team also continues to strengthen local partnership working through the Erewash Mental Health Sub-Group. Facilitated by the Mental Health Team and linked directly to the Erewash Health and Wellbeing Partnership, the group now includes representation from 12 organisations and a growing membership of 26 individuals, creating valuable opportunities for collaboration, shared learning, and coordinated action.

More recently the team successfully piloted an innovative micro-grants programme with a local secondary school using a "Dragons' Den" model. The pilot demonstrated the creativity, passion, and commitment of young people when given the opportunity to lead change within their school. Building on this success, the team is looking forward to expanding the programme to additional schools during 2026/27.

Mental Health

Looking Ahead

The team's expertise and collaborative approach have also been recognised through involvement in wider county initiatives. This year, team members were invited to join the project team for the inaugural Derbyshire FA Football Friends and Memories event. The event brought together hundreds of people through a shared love of football, helping to raise awareness of the impact of dementia while promoting the support and services available across Derbyshire.

At the heart of all this work is a dedicated team of three staff members and three volunteers. Together, they bring a wealth of knowledge, skills, experience, and passion that continue to drive the team's success and positive impact across Derbyshire.

As demand for community-based mental health support continues to grow, the team remains committed to working collaboratively with partners, empowering local communities, and creating opportunities for people to connect, thrive, and access support. Through innovation, partnership working, and a strong focus on prevention and early intervention, we look forward to continuing to make a positive difference across Derbyshire in the year ahead.

Summary

As we reflect on another successful year, we are incredibly proud of the positive difference Erewash Voluntary Action has made alongside our volunteers, community groups, partners and funders. Together, we have strengthened communities, supported individuals to improve their wellbeing, increased volunteering opportunities and helped local organisations to thrive.

We would like to thank everyone who has supported our work throughout the year. Your commitment, passion and collaboration enable us to create lasting change across Erewash.

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Stronger Together
Supporting our community,
building a better Erewash