



## Befriending at The Quays: A Social Return on Investment analysis

**Dr Lindsay Eckley**

*Applied Health and Wellbeing Partnership*

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## Executive Summary

The Quays is a peer-led drug and alcohol recovery project in Wirral. The project offers a befriending scheme, which provides peer support for people struggling to attend medical assessment appointments. A forecast social return on investment (SROI) analysis has been undertaken to measure the potential social impact of the befriending scheme. SROI offers a framework to gather and value the wider, softer outcomes as perceived by the stakeholders who invest in the project and those who experience a change as a result of the project's activities. The overall result is expressed as the social value that is created or destroyed by the project's activities in relation to the value of the total investment.

The SROI analysis involved a number of scoping and engagement activities. Members of The Quays management committee identified the key stakeholders as the volunteer befrienders, the befriendees, The Quays, ATOS Healthcare, NTG Training, NHS services, and the local government. Information was gathered from focus groups, interviews and questionnaires, and included the value of the inputs; the outcomes and their value; and the proportion of the outcome that can be attributed to the project only. The main inputs into the befriending scheme were identified as the volunteer time and expenses for befrienders, and the training, project management and administration costs afforded by The Quays. The key outcomes for the befrienders were identified as leading a purposeful life and having a focussed, productive day, further training/education opportunities, gaining employment, better social life, and improved health. The key outcomes for the befriendees were identified as saving a missed ATOS Healthcare appointment, increased confidence to seek further services or support and better family relationships. An impact map was used to work out the total value of the investments and the total value of the outcomes; subsequently these were used to calculate SROI.

The befriending scheme hosted by The Quays has the potential to create between £4.60 and £11.81 social value for every £1 invested.

## 1. Introduction

In Wirral, Merseyside, a peer-led drug and alcohol recovery project, The Quays, has been established. The project aims to provide peer support, access to courses and local services, information related to treatment and recovery, and hobby-related activities for those who have been affected by substance use. The Quays was initiated in July 2011 through funding made available from Wirral Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT). At this time, a group of volunteers in recovery formed a management committee to develop and implement the project which was officially launched in December 2011 through a public open day. The Quays project has been assessed using a mixed method, process and impact evaluation and a report has been produced providing findings and recommendations<sup>1</sup>. As well as the traditional evaluation, The Quays commissioners and management committee wanted a cost-effectiveness or value for money assessment so that they could apply for further funding and increase project sustainability. The Applied Health and Wellbeing Partnership (AHWP) were requested to carry out a social return on investment (SROI) of The Quays. Through consultation with the management committee, it was decided that The Quays was too large and complex to conduct an SROI on the whole project; therefore, a particular activity was chosen as the remit of the SROI analysis. This activity is a befriending scheme that has been developed by The Quays management committee.

### 1.1 Befriending at The Quays

The befriending scheme was developed in response to The Quays volunteers' experiences when they were either still using substances or early in recovery, and a gap in the current service provision. During discussions to learn about the befriending scheme, the management committee explained that isolation is a common feature amongst active substance users. Overcoming this isolation was seen as a challenge and a barrier to starting the recovery journey. Along with this, active substance users find it particularly difficult to attend medicals to assess their benefit status; they are intimidated by the health professionals and the outcome of the appointment, some even have trouble using public transport to get to the appointment venue. The management committee believed that having a peer to assist them with attending such appointments would be very beneficial. The befriending programme offers this service to anyone who is having difficulty attending their medical assessment appointments. Peer volunteers known as 'befrienders' arrange to meet up with the person having difficulty (will be referred to as 'befriendees') and assist them with travelling to the appointment. It is up to the befriender if the befriender accompanies them into the appointment or waits for them. Whilst, befrienders cannot influence the outcome of the assessment, they can remind the befriender of questions they need to ask and explain anything they did not understand.

Initially, The Quays piloted the befriending scheme with clients from Advocacy in Wirral (a peer-led mental health advocacy service), starting with mainly one-off befriending sessions. The vision is to build up the capacity of the befriending programme (befrienders, befriendees, and a training package for befrienders) so that they can offer the facility to the clients of local drug and alcohol treatment agencies and services. Eventually, it is hoped that befriending will be available for any appointment or activity (job interviews, GP appointments, and group therapy sessions) and on a longer-term basis (repeated help rather than one-off appointments).

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<sup>1</sup> Eckley L, Hughes L, Timpson H and Lavin R (2013) Evaluation of The Quays project, Wirral, Merseyside. Liverpool John Moores University.

## **1.2 Social Return on Investment**

SROI is a method of measuring the social, environmental and economic value of a project through the perspective of key stakeholders. In the past, commissioners and/or funders of projects and services have not appreciated or understood the significance of certain soft outcomes experienced by individuals, such as better relationships, higher wellbeing and more confidence. This is because changes such as these do not tend to have a direct monetary value. SROI provides a framework to capture and measure these wider outcomes as experienced by those who input into the project and those who benefit from it, using money as the common unit. It tells a story of change incorporating many points of enquiry including quantitative and qualitative data and financial information. The SROI is calculated using the ratio of the total value of the investment to the total value of the social benefits or outcomes; it is expressed as the amount of social value that is destroyed or created as a result of the project.

## 2. Methods

Ethical approval for the SROI activities was granted by the Liverpool John Moores University ethics committee (12/HEA/006).

### 2.1 Scoping the SROI

A meeting was held between AHWP and The Quays Management Committee to establish the remit of the SROI analysis.

Attendees at the meeting agreed that The Quays is a large and complex project and too difficult to include all of it into the SROI. Furthermore, AHWP have already carried out an evaluation that involves a range of traditional quantitative and qualitative methods to assess the overall effectiveness and impact of The Quays<sup>2</sup>. The befriending scheme was viewed as an important element of The Quays, and was therefore selected to be the activity for the focus of the SROI. Because the befriending scheme is a fairly young initiative that began in the first quarter of 2012, it was decided that a forecast SROI was to be undertaken that aimed to determine the expected or future changes for stakeholders projected over the next 12 months.

### 2.2 Identifying and engaging with stakeholders

Attendees at the scoping meeting were asked to identify all of the relevant stakeholders who should be invited to participate in the SROI. Stakeholders were identified as groups of people or organisations that input into the befriending scheme and those who benefit from it. In addition, the best ways in which to engage with each of the stakeholder groups were discussed.

#### 2.2.1 Approach

The stakeholder groups were contacted in a variety of ways to determine how they contribute to the befriending scheme or what they believe will change for them as a result of the programme. Detailed information of the changes was gathered by: identifying key changes (including negative and unexpected changes); deciding on indicators that would signify a change has taken place; the value of each indicator; and deciding on the level of impact that can be credited to befriending. For some groups, this involved reflecting on the experience they have gained already by being involved in befriending over the last few months since the scheme began, and using this knowledge to predict what may happen in the next year. For example, stakeholders may feel that their level of self-confidence will grow by being involved in the befriending scheme.

To identify suitable indicators and values for such changes, stakeholders were asked to consider the steps that will be taken to achieve it, what they will do as a result of this increased confidence or how they would have achieved the same level of confidence if the befriending scheme was not in place. Examples could be, to achieve the same level of confidence they would have to attend a confidence course, or, because they have more confidence, they feel they can have a more active social life and plan to go on a night out with friends every other week. The values for each of these examples would then be the cost of a typical confidence course or what they would expect to spend on an average night out respectively.

To further establish the proportion of each change that can be attributed to the befriending scheme (the impact), it is necessary to determine; 1. how likely it is the change would have happened anyway (deadweight), and 2. if any other projects/services/organisations/people

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

helped to bring about the change (attribution) (see Box 1 for more information on how this information was established). The results of these engagement activities were brought together to establish the theory of change (the relationship between inputs, outcomes and impact of a project or intervention) into an impact map (including the value information) and the final SROI result.

**Box 1. Typical lines of questioning to find values for indicators, and to determine deadweight and attribution**

**Valuing**

What is the value of that to you?

What are you able to do differently or what can you do now that you couldn't before?

If the project was not in place, what would you have to do to achieve the same level of change?

What would you be willing to pay to achieve that outcome?

**Deadweight**

How much has it changed by? (what was the level before the project, what is the level now?)

What are the chances that the change would have happened anyway if the project was not in place?

**Attribution**

What other organisations/services/projects/people have helped bring about this change?

How much have they contributed to the change?

What proportion of the change is due to the project only?

Did or will the contribution from other organisations/services/projects/people change with time? (this question is asked if the SROI is looking at more than one year)

**2.2.2 The Quays**

A meeting was held with two peer volunteers who are responsible for the day-to-day running of The Quays in June 2012. The meeting was to establish a clearer understanding of the befriending scheme, how it was developed, how it is organised and financed, the aspirations for the scheme and gain an idea of the existing data that is collected. Financial information relating to the befriending scheme was determined via email and a final meeting with The Quays administrator to establish the value of all the inputs in February 2013.

**2.2.3 Befrienders**

A selection of befrienders were invited to participate in the engagement activities. In July and August 2012, two focus groups were held with a selection of befrienders to establish what has changed for them already or what will change over the next 12 months because of their involvement as a volunteer in the befriending scheme. The first session concentrated on the changes or expected changes; befrienders were invited to share with the group their experiences as a volunteer befriender and how it has impacted their life. Many of the experiences were similar and allowed changes and outcomes to emerge. The second focus group concentrated on clarifying the key outcomes and deciding what indicators to use, attempting to value them and establishing proportions for deadweight and attribution. Five key changes and indicators were determined with a perception of how they could be valued. The information was used to develop a questionnaire so that a larger sample of befrienders could be consulted and to establish: the number of befrienders who would expect the key outcomes to take place; the value of each indicator; and levels of deadweight and attribution (by percentage). Approximately 22 questionnaires were supplied to The Quays to be



distributed amongst existing befrienders (including the participants who attended the focus groups). Fourteen were returned for analysis. The values for each indicator, and the levels of deadweight and attribution, were averaged across the respondents.

#### 2.2.4 Befriendees

It was considered inappropriate and too time consuming to consult the befriendees at this stage because of their vulnerability. Therefore, two befrienders agreed to act as proxy befriendees in a paired interview, using their past experiences to inform what outcomes are likely to take place for befriendees. Valuing of indicators, and levels of deadweight and attribution, were also collected through discussion with the proxy befriendees.

#### 2.2.5 Other stakeholders

During the engagement activities with the stakeholder groups, other stakeholders were identified: NHS services; ATOS Healthcare<sup>3</sup>; local government; and NTG Training<sup>4</sup>. The way in which these stakeholders invest and/or benefit from the befriending scheme was established through both the existing data and the information provided by the stakeholders that were consulted, and appear as separate stakeholder groups in the impact map.

### 2.3 Impact map and SROI calculation

The results of the engagement activities were brought together and inputted into an impact map. The impact map is a pre-prepared spreadsheet separated into the different stakeholder groups vertically, and the inputs and outcomes horizontally. Formulas are inserted into the spreadsheet to calculate the impact value for each indicator, taking into account quantity (the number of people experiencing the change) and impact (values for deadweight and attribution in percentages). The impact value of each indicator for all stakeholder groups is totalled and the present value of the project determined. The present value refers to the current value of the cash flows discounted by the future value, which is calculated at 3.5% for the purposes of SROI analysis<sup>5</sup>. The SROI is calculated by working out the ratio of return by dividing the present value of the project impact (the total value of the benefits) by the total value of investment.

A sensitivity analysis was carried out on the variables where assumptions were made or discrepancies were found to assess the robustness of the impact map. This involves changing the variables under question and examining the effect on the overall SROI result. A large variation in the SROI result after variables are adjusted indicates uncertainty in the figure.

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<sup>3</sup> Carry out medical assessments on those receiving incapacity benefits.

<sup>4</sup> Run training sessions within organisations offering qualifications (such as NVQs). NTG Training currently supply a tutor for the befriending training at The Quays and also pay for room hire.

<sup>5</sup> The recommended discount rate for public funds (HM Treasury (2003) The Government Green Book.

### 3. Results

All activities and costs are correct at the time of undertaking the SROI.

#### 3.1 Inputs to the befriending scheme

Inputs are the investments required to set up and deliver the project. These are mainly financial costs, but time and effort can also be incorporated to give a full picture of the value of the investments. The Quays initiated a befriending training package which was completed by NTG Training. At the time of undertaking this SROI, the training is delivered by an NTG Training tutor within The Quays. This training company also pays a room hire fee to The Quays for the training days, with refreshments provided by The Quays. All befrienders are required to obtain Criminal Records Bureau disclosure and are provided with items of stationery (e.g. a diary, paper and pens). The befriending scheme is coordinated and managed by a volunteer administrator, working the equivalent of two days per week on the project.

The volunteer befrienders invest their time and passion; whilst this does not have a direct cost implication, the value can be estimated using proxy values (in this case national minimum wage multiplied by the average time afforded to befriending). The befrienders also claim for travel and sustenance expenses for befriending sessions to meet the befriender and get to the appointment. Table 1 shows the annual value of each input into the befriending scheme.

Table 1 Annual Value of Inputs into Befriending Scheme

Stakeholder group	Input description	Value	Source/notes
The Quays	Development of training package	£154.00	A one-off cost of £770 was paid to put together the training package; it is assumed the training package will last five years before needing updating/refreshing
	Project management and administration (1 person, 2 days per week)	£4,896.00	Proxy value was used; duties assumed to be similar to the paid position of The Quays/Advocacy in Wirral administration link (hourly wage x 15 hours week x 48 working weeks per year)
	CRB application (befrienders x 48 trained per year)	£480.00	Applied for through Wirral CSV at a discounted rate of £10
	CRB application (project management)	£5.00	Value halved due to only half volunteer time spent on befriending
	Stationery	£200.00	Estimated to cost £50 per quarter
	Catering/refreshments at training sessions	£168.00	Estimated to cost £3.50 per head

	Business on costs (office equipment, electricity etc)	£1,213.18	Estimated to be 20% of project management and volunteer time spent in the building
NTG Training	Training of volunteer befrienders (a 5-day training session run each quarter with an estimated maximum of 12 attendees per session)	£2,400.00	NTG Training pays for the tutor costs for delivering the befriending training. The initial training was paid for by The Quays at a cost of £720 for a total of six days of training; this works out at £120 per training day
	Room hire to conduct training	£2,000.00	Room hire fee is £100 per training day
Befrienders	Time	£3,509.73	Using the estimated number of befriendees per year (189) and an estimated three hours per client (paper work, meeting, waiting and appointment), multiplied by the national minimum wage (£6.19, 2012)
	Expenses	£1,311.45	The Quays supplied expenses data for the months April to December 2012 inclusive; this was averaged per month and multiplied for the year
<b>Total value of inputs</b>		<b>£16,337.36</b>	

### 3.2 The outcomes of the befriending scheme

The direct beneficiaries of the befriending scheme are the befrienders who volunteer to support someone in need, and the befriendees who use the service to attend an appointment. During the stakeholder engagement events, the volunteer befrienders described a number of wider social benefits for both these stakeholder groups. These benefits are expressed in the following theory of change statement:

#### Theory of Change

The Quays is a peer-led alcohol and drug recovery project that offers a befriending scheme, which provides peer support to people who are struggling to attend medical assessment appointments. For the befrienders, the scheme can provide further training/education opportunities, employment opportunities, improve health and social wellbeing, and improve motivation and productivity. The scheme can also improve communication, social skills and resilience. For the befriendees, the scheme can increase confidence to seek future services or support, improve family relationships, and save missed healthcare appointments.

### 3.2.1 Befrienders' outcomes

In the initial focus group, five befrienders described the current and expected future benefits of being involved in the befriending scheme. In the second focus group there were three befrienders (two of which were present at the first focus group). As well as deciding on the key outcomes, the focus groups discussed at length the wider benefits of being a volunteer befriender. A complicated interaction of outcomes was presented by the participants, summarised in figure 1 and below. In the second focus group, the participants were asked to decide which key outcomes would be experienced by most befrienders in the next 12 months because of their involvement in the scheme. These outcomes, along with possible indicators, values and levels of impact, were integrated into a questionnaire to consult a larger sample of befrienders.

#### *Personal positivity*

The befrienders highlighted that they were less fearful now as a result of being involved with befriending and The Quays in general. This has led to feelings of hope about future prospects, mainly in relation to training and employment. The participants felt they could realistically think about taking part in further education, which they believe would happen within the next few months to a year. Some were optimistic that they could secure employment within that time frame. Befrienders felt a sense of responsibility towards their duties as a volunteer and described feelings of having a purpose and being worthwhile. They stated that, because of this, they have better personal care. For example, taking daily showers, shaving, personal hygiene regime and putting on clean clothes. One described taking care of themselves as being prepared to take their medication and attend their regular medical appointments for an ongoing condition; this participant believed that they have improved their long-term health. The rest of the group also agreed that their long-term physical and mental health had, and will continue to, improve.

#### *Improved communication*

The befrienders believed they were more confident around figures of authority and there was much discussion about their relationship with doctors. The participants stated they were more willing to make appointments to see their GP, whereas previously, before becoming a volunteer, they would ignore their medical problem. A few of the befrienders also highlighted that they feel more equal and respected during the appointment with their GP; they feel less stigmatised because of their prior addiction. Befrienders also explained how they felt more assertive, and better able to communicate. One participant felt less fearful of people in suits and explained that they could now talk to such people at events; another participant described being able to stand up and talk in front of a crowd. In the second focus group, the participants explained that their relationship with friends and family had improved. This has led to a more active social life, such as going to the cinema or out for meals.

#### *Increased training opportunities*

As part of being a befriender, the volunteers are expected to undertake befriending training. Other training courses are also hosted by The Quays which may be attended by the befrienders, such as mentor training and mental health first aid. The volunteers can also take part in their Health and Social Care NVQ whilst at The Quays. The participants believed that being a befriender led to motivation towards education and training. They thought that this would subsequently lead to increased job opportunities, with most participants aspiring to become a drug and alcohol support worker or mentor.

#### *Feel more open and caring*

As well as better personal care, the participants described that they were more genuine and open with other people. They believed this was essential for their responsibilities as a befriender. The participants also highlighted that receiving support during their own recovery has inspired them to want to help others, and in doing so further encourages them to take

care of themselves. However, for one participant, it had enhanced self-protection mechanisms. Whilst they felt more trusting around social peers, they had also learnt to be careful about what they shared and with whom. The participants described these as 'life skills' that cannot be taught and that having an addiction creates a barrier to learning them. They believed that being in recovery and taking part in activities such as befriending allows these skills to be developed. It was also perceived that acquiring social skills and being a part of society by volunteering would help to break down the stigma against drug and alcohol users.

#### *Improved resilience*

The group defined resilience as the ability to cope with everyday life. Early in their recovery the participants realised that they were not the only ones to have experienced problems and that they could gain peer support to cope with their problems. They believed that being a befriender had helped them to further cope with day to day issues, such as being able to pay household bills on time rather than turning to drink or drugs because of the pressure. The participants described these daily activities as "hum drums" that they had to deal with, they felt they were better able to cope with them and befriending stopped them becoming depressed.

#### *Increased motivation*

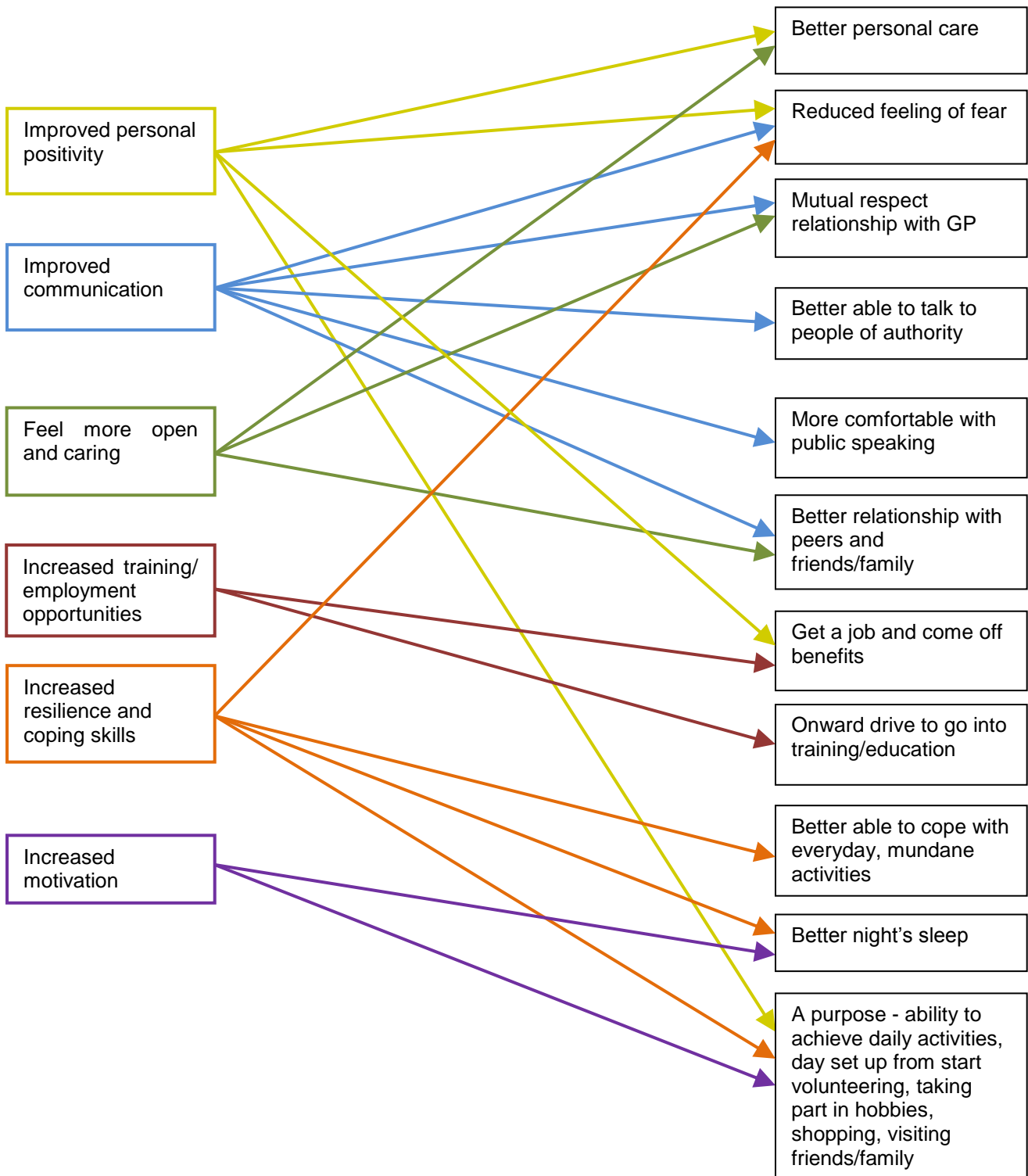
All the befrienders believed that being a befriender gives them motivation for the rest of the day. The participants reiterated that, before their befriending role, they would tend to stay in their house, not look after themselves, watch television and generally not look forward to anything. Having a befriending duty helps to set up a daily structure and focus, such as volunteering at The Quays, going shopping, taking part in their hobbies or visiting family/friends. They explained that they now get a better night's sleep which, in turn, improves the motivation to undertake activities the next day.

### **3.2.2 Befriendees**

Two befrienders were used as proxy befriendees as it was thought too difficult and time consuming to engage with the clients themselves. They explained befriending in detail and highlighted key benefits for the befriendees. In the early stages of the befriending scheme, many of the befriendees would have been referred by Advocacy in Wirral, however, some may have learned about the scheme via word of mouth. The majority of the appointments which the befriendees require support to attend are ATOS Healthcare medical assessments. ATOS Healthcare work on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions to assess clients benefit status. The participants explained that most befriendees will currently be on Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) (the value of which depends on what stage the client is at, which of the work support groups they are in and personal circumstances). If they are declared fit to work at the medical they are diverted onto Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). Being dependent on JSA is undesirable because they will be required to attend regular appointments at the Job Centre and be actively seeking work, which they feel they cannot sustain. If they pass the medical they continue ESA, but are also provided with a work related activity group (support from a personal advisor to help them get back into employment) or support groups. The befriendees believed that there was a high missed appointment rate for the ATOS Healthcare assessments because of the fear surrounding the outcome and the general lack of self-confidence to get to the appointment. The befrienders believed they gave the befriendees the confidence to attend them, thus, saving missed appointments. Befrienders will also offer the client advice and explain the possible outcomes to them, make sure they ask the right questions and ensure that they are treated correctly during the appointment. However, they were very conscious of the fact that they could not influence the outcome of the appointment.

The befrienders described that the confidence the befriender has gained through being befriended, has a positive effect on their motivation to seek further services. The participants explained that many of the befriendeds will be renting their home through a private landlord, but that they were unaware they could access financial support to help pay for this. The befrienders also explained that some befriendeds have complex family issues; for example, they may have split from a partner or spouse and are unable to visit their children because of the cost of travel. The befrienders are able to explain to the befriendeds that they may be able to claim for travel support; the participants believed that this could improve family relationships.

A negative outcome of befriending was highlighted by the participants. The befrienders acknowledged that some of the befriendeds would use the benefits they receive to fund their substance use; however, further discussion revealed that felt this would happen anyway despite the befriending scheme (and thus, did not contribute to the impact of befriending activities).



**Figure 1. The themes and outcomes identified by the befrienders during focus group sessions**

### 3.2.3 Key outcomes to be valued

Using the findings from the stakeholder engagement events, key outcomes and indicators emerged. Some of the outcomes relate to indirect stakeholder groups. Table 2 shows the key outcomes and indicators that were used to value the activities of the befriending scheme.

Table 2 The key outcomes and indicators valued to assess impact of the befriending scheme, by stakeholder

Stakeholder group	Key outcome description	Indicator	Source
Befrienders	Confidence to lead a more purposeful life, and having a focussed and productive day	The ability to maintain a volunteer position	Focus group/questionnaire
	Involved in further education/training	Befriending training at The Quays	Focus group/questionnaire
		Mentor training at The Quays	Focus group/questionnaire
		Mental health first aid course at The Quays	Focus group/questionnaire
		First aid in the workplace course at The Quays	Focus group/questionnaire
	Gaining employment	Job as a drug/alcohol/mental health support worker/mentor (part time)	Focus group/questionnaire
		Job as a drug/alcohol/mental health support worker/mentor (full time)	Focus group/questionnaire
	Better social life with friends and family	Meals out	Focus group/questionnaire
		Trips to the cinema	Focus group/questionnaire
		Going to a cafe	Focus group/questionnaire
NHS services	Better physical/mental health of the befrienders	Decrease in GP visits	Focus group/questionnaire
		Increase in GP visits (negative)	Focus group/questionnaire
		Decrease in number of prescriptions/medication	Focus group/questionnaire
Befriendees	Increased confidence or desire to seek further help/access services	Number of people seeking support to access correct housing benefit for private rental	Paired interview with two current befrienders acting as proxy befriendees
	Better family relationships	Number of people receiving funds for a bus ticket to visit family	Paired interview with two current befrienders acting as proxy befriendees
	Use of benefits to fund substance use (negative)	Number of people likely to use money to continue to buy substances	Paired interview with two current befrienders acting as proxy befriendees



ATOS Healthcare	Befriending saving a wasted appointment	The estimated reduction of 'did not attend's (clients to have attended an appointment who would have otherwise not attended)	Paired interview with two current befrienders acting as proxy befriendees
Local government	Having to pay more money on housing benefits (negative)	Number of people claiming housing benefit for private rent	Double interview with two current befrienders acting as proxy befriendees

### 3.3 Social return on investment analysis

To calculate SROI, variables are entered into the impact map for each input activity and indicator. In order for the impact map to formulate the final result, certain steps have to be performed. (The impact map containing the information and the calculations can be accessed at the end of this report).

#### 3.3.1 Quantity

To calculate the impact value it is necessary to establish the number of people who are expected to experience each key outcome. For the befrienders and the linked indirect stakeholder groups, the responses to the questionnaire were scaled up to assume that The Quays would have a bank of 20 befrienders at any one time (this estimate was provided by The Quays). For example, 13 of the 14 respondents would expect to be involved in further education or training, and of these eight would expect to attend the mental health first aid course at The Quays. Therefore, the quantity entered for this indicator was '12' ( $8 \div 13 \times 20$ ). For the befriendees and the linked indirect stakeholder groups, it was estimated that there would be 189 befriendees per year (data provided by the proxy befriendees and confirmed by The Quays). During the paired interview with the two befrienders acting as proxy befriendees, the participants estimated the percentage of befriendees who would likely experience each outcome. This was used to work out quantity from the total number of estimated befriendees per year.

#### 3.3.2 Value of indicator

The values for each input (see table 1) and indicator were arrived at through the various stakeholder engagement activities (focus group, questionnaire, double interview and meetings/communication with The Quays), using the line of questioning in box 1. Where the valuing of an indicator was too difficult for stakeholders or could not be provided by the stakeholders (for example, costing a GP appointment) proxy values and existing data were sought.

#### 3.3.3 Impact

Levels of deadweight (the proportion of the outcome that would have happened anyway) and attribution (the proportion of the outcome that can be attributed to other influences), were provided by the questionnaire responses (befrienders) and the paired interview with proxy befriendees (befriendees). The level of deadweight for the negative outcome of having to pay more money on housing benefits relating to the 'local government' stakeholder was found through existing data. There was a background increase in the number of people claiming housing benefits for private rent of 5% between August 2011 and August 2012<sup>6</sup>. This was used as the level of deadweight.

<sup>6</sup> Office of National Statistics (2012). Housing benefit and council tax benefit caseload statistics release. Department for Work and Pensions.

### 3.3.4 Positive and negative outcomes

Positive outcomes create social value and negative values destroy it. In the impact map, the values of the positive outcomes are combined to give the total value of the benefits whilst the values of negative outcomes are deducted from the overall value of the benefits.

### 3.3.5 SROI result

## **The Quays befriending scheme has the potential to create £11.91 of social value for every £1 invested\*.**

\*See section 4.1 for important caveats on this figure

### 3.3.1 Sensitivity analysis

Sensitivity tests were applied to the questionable variables in the impact map to assess the effect on the SROI result.

Sensitivity test 1: The befriender outcomes regarding the ability to maintain a volunteer position and gaining employment could be construed as double counting (befrienders cannot experience both outcomes at the same time). Therefore, the quantity of befrienders gaining employment was reduced to a low level (one person finding a part-time job and one person finding a full-time job). This was based on information from The Quays that one befriender who attended a focus group had found full time employment in December 2012. An assumption was made that potentially another befriender could find part-time employment. The quantity of befrienders holding a volunteer position was reduced accordingly by two (n=18). A medium level test was further applied assuming that, of the respondents to the befriender questionnaire who would expect to experience this change in the next year, three befrienders would find part-time employment and seven befrienders would find full-time employment (reducing the quantity of each indicator by approximately half, and again changing the quantity of befrienders maintaining a volunteer position accordingly).

*SROI result (low): £4.60 for every £1 invested  
SROI result (medium): £7.06 for every £1 invested*

Sensitivity test 2: The average level of attribution for maintaining a volunteer position given by befrienders on the questionnaire was 22%. Therefore, they believe that other projects/services/organisations/people were responsible for around a fifth of the impact of this change. This seems fairly low given that the deadweight value is high (64%) and they are also volunteers of The Quays amongst other organisations. The attribution for this indicator was changed to 50% reflecting findings from the befriender focus group and five of the respondents to the questionnaire. A higher level of attribution of 75% was also applied as suggested by two of the questionnaire respondents.

*SROI result (50%): £10.96 for every £1 invested  
SROI result (75%): £10.11 for every £1 invested*

Sensitivity test 3: Findings from the proxy befriendees showed that befriending could encourage clients to seek further services. The participants suggested that befriendees would access financial support for private rent and that the quantity was estimated to be 25% of those who were successfully befriended (n=47). However, the quantity of the other indicators relating to befriendees was estimated to be 10%; therefore, this quantity was applied to the indicator 'number of people seeking support to get correct housing benefit for private rental'. This outcome is also linked to the outcome for the 'local government'

stakeholder whereby they have to pay out more money in housing benefits; the change in the quantity was also reflected here.

*SROI result: £11.54 for every £1 invested*

The tests have revealed the current SROI is sensitive to changes in the outcome concerning the befrienders' ability to gain employment (test 1). Even a conservative change in the parameters creates a dramatic change in the SROI result, meaning that this outcome warranted further scrutiny and benchmarking. Although the SROI result changed with the other tests, they were not as significant and gives some confidence in the figures.

### **3.4 Limitations**

- The SROI analysis of the befriending scheme was a forecast SROI that aimed to explore the potential impact over a 12 month period. Thus, the resulting SROI is constrained by the stakeholders' view of the expected outcomes, the assumptions placed on the variables (such as quantity) and the subjectivity surrounding the value of the outcomes. There could be a degree of over- or under-estimation where stakeholders have misunderstood what they were being asked and/or been unrealistic about the future outcomes and their value.
- SROI itself is a new technique and is approached in a different way by different people, depending on the nature of the application. However, a guide has been produced based on the methods suggested by the SROI Network<sup>7</sup>, the present analysis attempted to adhere to the principles proposed by this resource. Furthermore, given that the approach is inconsistent across case studies and projects are individual, SROI results cannot be reliably compared or generalised.
- Some of the key stakeholder groups in this analysis could not be engaged, namely the befriendees. Instead, befrienders acted as proxy befriendees to determine the key outcomes for this stakeholder group. In addition, the befriendees' family members were identified as potential beneficiary but were not contacted and did not contribute to the values/outputs/stuff. Therefore, vital information and key outcomes could have been omitted and not accounted for in the analysis.
- The Quays estimated that it would provide befriending training for approximately 48 volunteers per year, of which only a proportion of these will subsequently become a befriender. It is possible that the training will have social benefits for those who do not become a befriender; however, this was not captured in the current analysis meaning the social value could actually be higher.
- The befriending scheme is a new initiative and is being expanded by The Quays; for example, at the time of writing this report, the project had begun to move from mainly one-off befriending appointments to repeated befriending, supporting the same befriendees over time. The social value for the befriendees is probably an underestimation and could have implications on the overall SROI result.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.thesroinetwork.org/>

## 4. Summary

This report provides a social value analysis of a befriending scheme developed by The Quays, a peer-led drug and alcohol recovery project in Wirral. The project offers the services of a peer to support people struggling to attend medical assessment appointments. Social return in investment (SROI) was employed to measure the social impact of the befriending scheme. SROI offers a framework to gather and value the wider, softer outcomes as perceived by the stakeholders who invest in the project and those who experience a change as a result of the project's activities. The overall result is expressed as the social value that is created or destroyed by the project's activities in relation to the value of the total investment.

Stakeholders of the befriending scheme were identified by The Quays Management Committee and were engaged in a variety of ways to gather evidence of what is invested into the project and what outcomes are achieved. The stakeholders of the befriending scheme were the volunteer befrienders, the befriendees, The Quays, ATOS Healthcare, NTG Training, NHS services, and the local government. The information gathered included: the value of the inputs; the outcomes and their value; and the proportion of the outcome that can be attributed to the project only. The main inputs into the befriending scheme were the volunteer time and expenses for befrienders, and the training, project management and administration costs afforded by The Quays. The key outcomes for the befrienders were identified as: leading a purposeful life and having a focussed, productive day; further training/education opportunities; gaining employment; better social life; and improved health. The key outcomes for the befriendees were identified as: saving a missed ATOS Healthcare appointment; increased confidence to seek further services or support; and better family relationships. An impact map was used to work out the total value of the investments and the total value of the outcomes; subsequently these were used to calculate SROI.

### 4.1 Conclusion

The befriending scheme hosted by The Quays creates social value at a potential of £11.91 for every £1 invested. However, caution should be taken when advertising the results of this SROI due to certain caveats in the analysis; for example, the sensitivity tests showed that at least one variable may not be reliable, and the limitations that could point to under- or over-estimation. Therefore, the SROI should be presented as a range as follows:

**“The Quays befriending scheme has the potential to create between £4.60 and £11.91 social value for every £1 invested”**

### 4.2 Recommendations

Due to the constraints described above, the author would like to suggest the following:

- The present SROI is a forecast that looks at the predicted social value for the next 12 months; an evaluation SROI exploring the actual impact would provide a better assessment of the social value. This could be carried out once the project has been fully established and been running for a while (preferably for at least a year)
- To support any future evaluation or cost-effectiveness studies on the befriending scheme; the stakeholders should think of ways to monitor the key inputs and outputs relating to the project's activities. A detailed record of the finances is required and outputs for the main beneficiaries (the befrienders and the befriendees) should be captured. The Quays has access to tools to enable this, such as the Outcome Star. If used regularly over time (befrienders) and at the start and end of a befriending session (befriendees), this tool could provide a measure of distance travelled in

relation to certain aspects such as social relationships and physical/mental health. In addition, befrienders could keep a field diary noting key outcomes or changes as a result of volunteering on the project, especially in relation to job seeking achievements. A follow-up questionnaire could be employed with the befriended to explore how the befriending scheme has impacted their lives.

## 5. Impact Map

Please contact the report author for a copy of the SROI Impact Map  
Dr Lindsay Eckley: [L.J.Eckley@ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:L.J.Eckley@ljmu.ac.uk) / 0151 231 4046

## 6. Appendices

### Appendix 1 Focus group agenda

#### Forecast SROI Engagement Event with The Quays Befrienders and Volunteers

29<sup>th</sup> May 2012, The Quays Headquarters

Participant information sheets and consent forms will be distributed to befrienders and volunteers in the week preceding the focus group. Consent will be obtained by the group at the beginning of the engagement event.

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#### Agenda

1. Introductions

2. Overview of evaluation and SROI

*“Social return on investment is a method to measure the social value of a project. In the past people who pay for services and projects have not really cared for changes that are important to the people and community, but that do not have a direct monetary value. These are changes such as better relationships or higher wellbeing. SROI uses money as a common unit to value social, environmental and economic changes, putting the outcome in the language a service provider understands. In effect the SROI will give the overall strap line ‘for every £1 invested in the befriending scheme, £x in social value has been or will be created’*

Explain the SROI will look at the expected changes each stakeholder will experience as a result of being involved in the **befriending programme**, initially looking at changes in the next 12 months but would be willing to extend the time frame if the participants want to.

\*Collect consent from all participants at this point\*

3. First of all participants are to consider what/how they contribute to the befriending programme – specific questions could be *“what do you input or contribute to the befriending programme?”*

4. Participants to consider what will change for them as a result of their involvement with the befriending programme and discuss in a way they want to. Also, consider any negative or unexpected side effects of the changes. Methods could include:

- Using a piece of paper and thinking about changes in a timeline
- Participants discuss changes out loud amongst everyone present
- Work individually or in pairs writing changes on sticky notes and placing them on a board

As a group come to a consensus on the key/most important changes

5. The group will then consider how to value each of the key changes in turn, making sure each one is a ‘material’ change. Questions could be – *“If the befriending was not there, what would you do otherwise to make the same change?”* or *“what will you do as a result of such a change?”* or *“what would you be willing to pay for that change?”*

6. If time and we still have the concentration of the group, consider drop-off, deadweight and attribution for each key change:

Drop-off - *“How long will that change last?”* and if it lasts for less than one year, *“by how much will the change reduce?”* (this may not be needed as we are initially looking at a 12 month forecast, there may be no drop-off)

Dead-weight - *“If the befriending programme was not there, would you have been able to make that change in another way?”*

Attribution - *“Is there anyone else or another organisation that will contributed or will help to make that change?”*



**Appendix 2 Questionnaire**

<p><b>Change 1 “I am more confident that I am able to lead a more purposeful life”</b></p> <p><b>1a</b> This change applies to me now or I expect it to in the next 12 months</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/> (If no, move onto change 2 below)</p>	<p><b>1b</b> The focus group believed that this has led to them being able to hold a regular volunteering position. Do you agree with this?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, how many days per week do you or will you spend volunteering as a befriender?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>(If no, please answer the question below and then move onto change 2)</p>	<p><b>1c</b> If this was a full time and paid position, approximately how much would you expect to get as a yearly salary? (Please tick one)</p> <p>£13,000-14,000 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>£15,000-16,000 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>£17,000-18,000 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please state below) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>.....</p>	<p><b>1d</b> If you were not a befriender, how likely is it that you would be in a volunteer position anyway, either now or in the next 12 months? (please tick one)</p> <p>Not likely at all (0%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>A small chance (25%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>A 50/50 chance <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>A high chance (75%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Definitely would have happened anyway (100%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please state below) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>.....</p>	<p><b>1e</b> Have any other organisations/services/ activities/people helped or will help you make this change? By how much? (please tick one)</p> <p>This change is all because I am a befriender (0%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other organisations/people have contributed a little to this change (25%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other organisations/people are responsible for about half of this change (50%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other organisations/people have contributed a lot to this change happening (75%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please state below) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>.....</p>
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If you answered ‘no’ to part 1b, please describe below what impact an increase in confidence and feeling more purposeful has had, or will have, on your life. Think about what you can do now because of this change.

<p><b>Change 2 “I do more training/education courses”</b></p> <p><b>2a</b> This change applies to me now or I expect it to in the next 12 months</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/> (If no, move onto change 3 below)</p>	<p><b>2b</b> The focus group identified the following training courses. Have you or will you be attending any of these? (tick all that apply)</p> <p>Befriender training <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Mentor training <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Mental health awareness <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>First aid in the workplace <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please state below) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>.....</p>	<p><b>2c</b> If you were to pay for these courses, how much would you be willing to pay for a day’s training on each of the courses you have ticked?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p><b>2d</b> If you were not a befriender, how likely is it that you would be attending any training or courses anyway, either now or in the next 12 months? (please tick one)</p> <p>Not likely at all (0%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>A small chance (25%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>A 50/50 chance <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>A high chance (75%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Definitely would have happened anyway (100%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please state below) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>.....</p>	<p><b>2e</b> Have any other organisations/services/ activities/people helped or will help you make this change? By how much? (please tick one)</p> <p>This change is all because I am a befriender (0%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other organisations/people have contributed a little to this change (25%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other organisations/people are responsible for about half of this change (50%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other organisations/people have contributed a lot to this change happening (75%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please state below) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>.....</p>
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<p><b>Change 3 “I have a job or expect to be in a job soon”</b></p> <p><b>3a</b> This change applies to me now or I expect it to in the next 12 months</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/> (If no, move onto change 4 below)</p>	<p><b>3b</b> The focus group mentioned that becoming a drug/alcohol/mental health support worker or similar is a job they could see themselves in. Do you agree with this?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If no, what type of job would you like?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p><b>3c</b> Would this be a full time or part time position?</p> <p>Full time <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Part time <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>How much would you expect to be paid per year for this before tax and national insurance? (please state a value)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p><b>3d</b> If you were not a befriender, how likely is it that you would be in a job anyway, either now or in the next 12 months? (please tick one)</p> <p>Not likely at all (0%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>A small chance (25%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>A 50/50 chance <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>A high chance (75%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Definitely would have happened anyway (100%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please state below) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>.....</p>	<p><b>3e</b> Have any other organisations/services/ activities/people helped or will help you make this change? By how much? (please tick one)</p> <p>This change is all because I am a befriender (0%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other organisations/people have contributed a little to this change (25%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other organisations/people are responsible for about half of this change (50%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other organisations/people have contributed a lot to this change happening (75%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please state below) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>.....</p>
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<p><b>Change 4 “I socialise more with friends and family”</b></p> <p><b>4a</b> This change applies to me now or I expect it to in the next 12 months</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/> (If no, move onto change 5 below)</p>	<p><b>4b</b> The focus group identified the following activities as something they do more often now with their friends and family. Which do you do more often now? (tick all that apply)</p> <p>Going out for meals <input type="checkbox"/> →</p> <p>Going to the cinema <input type="checkbox"/> →</p> <p>Going to a cafe <input type="checkbox"/> →</p> <p>Other (please state below) <input type="checkbox"/> → .....</p>	<p><b>4c</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="920 424 1115 647">For each one you have ticked, how many times do you do this per month?</th> <th data-bbox="1115 424 1310 647">For each one you have ticked, approx. how much do you typically pay each time?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="920 647 1115 746"></td> <td data-bbox="1115 647 1310 746"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="920 746 1115 845"></td> <td data-bbox="1115 746 1310 845"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="920 845 1115 944"></td> <td data-bbox="1115 845 1310 944"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="920 944 1115 1043"></td> <td data-bbox="1115 944 1310 1043"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	For each one you have ticked, how many times do you do this per month?	For each one you have ticked, approx. how much do you typically pay each time?									<p><b>4d</b> If you were not a befriender, how likely is it that you would socialise more with friends and family anyway, either now or in the next 12 months? (please tick one)</p> <p>Not likely at all (0%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>A small chance (25%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>A 50/50 chance <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>A high chance (75%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Definitely would have happened anyway (100%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please state below) <input type="checkbox"/> .....</p>	<p><b>4e</b> Have any other organisations/services/ activities/people helped or will help you make this change? By how much? (please tick one)</p> <p>This change is all because I am a befriender (0%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other organisations/people have contributed a little to this change (25%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other organisations/people are responsible for about half of this change (50%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other organisations/people have contributed a lot to this change happening (75%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please state below) <input type="checkbox"/> .....</p>
For each one you have ticked, how many times do you do this per month?	For each one you have ticked, approx. how much do you typically pay each time?													

<p><b>Change 5</b> <i>“My physical and/or mental health has got better and I have better personal care”</i></p> <p><b>5a</b> This change applies to me now or I expect it to in the next 12 months</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/> (If no, please return the questionnaire to Paul Berry)</p>	<p><b>5b</b> The focus group thought that this would lead to changes in the use of medical services. Which of these have changed for you or you think could change in the next 12 months? (tick all that apply)</p> <p>Visiting a GP less or more often <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Needing less or more medication/prescriptions <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Having less or more hospital visits or admissions <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please state below) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>.....</p>	<p><b>5c</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="920 421 1099 715">For each one you have ticked, how many times did this happen per year before?</th> <th data-bbox="1104 421 1310 715">For each one you have ticked, approx. how many times do you think it will happen now or in the next 12 months?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="920 718 1099 810"></td> <td data-bbox="1104 718 1310 810"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="920 813 1099 906"></td> <td data-bbox="1104 813 1310 906"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="920 909 1099 1002"></td> <td data-bbox="1104 909 1310 1002"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="920 1005 1099 1098"></td> <td data-bbox="1104 1005 1310 1098"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	For each one you have ticked, how many times did this happen per year before?	For each one you have ticked, approx. how many times do you think it will happen now or in the next 12 months?									<p><b>5d</b> If you were not a befriender, how likely is it that you would socialise more with friends and family anyway, either now or in the next 12 months? (please tick one)</p> <p>Not likely at all (0%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>A small chance (25%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>A 50/50 chance <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>A high chance (75%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Definitely would have happened anyway (100%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please state below) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>.....</p>	<p><b>5e</b> Have any other organisations/services/activities/people helped or will help you make this change? By how much? (please tick one)</p> <p>This change is all because I am a befriender (0%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other organisations/people have contributed a little to this change (25%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other organisations/people are responsible for about half of this change (50%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other organisations/people have contributed a lot to this change happening (75%) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please state below) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>.....</p>
For each one you have ticked, how many times did this happen per year before?	For each one you have ticked, approx. how many times do you think it will happen now or in the next 12 months?													

If you have ticked 'yes' to part 5a, please describe below how your physical/mental health has changed since becoming a befriender or how you think it will change over the next 12 months of being a befriender. Think about what you can do now that is different and what impact/value this change has had or will have on your life.