

Good Practice Guide

'Walk in their shoes': Learning from the Work Live Leicestershire (WiLL) project

WORK.LIVE.
LEICESTERSHIRE



WALK IN YOUR PARTICIPANTS SHOES



UNDERSTAND THE LOCAL AREA AND BUILD LOCAL CONNECTIONS ... FEEL EMPATHY

HOW TO REACH PEOPLE



OUR BARISTA VAN HELPED US TO GET WHERE OUR PEOPLE WERE



WE NEED TO BUILD STRONG NETWORKS

MAKE SURE PEOPLE KNOW THE DOOR IS OPEN TO THEM ANY TIME THEY NEED TO COME BACK



LISTEN AND ELABORATE



WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS & WANTS OF PEOPLE WE WORK WITH



FIND OUT WHAT THEY WANT TO ACHIEVE AND BREAK IT DOWN INTO BABY STEPS



KEY WORKERS SHOULD ACT AS NAVIGATORS, GUIDING PARTICIPANTS THROUGH COMPLEX PROCESSES



CAN WE MAKE WORK MORE ACCESSIBLE BY HELPING PEOPLE LEARN NEW WAYS OF DOING THINGS?



WE NEED PROCESSES & CRITERIA THAT FIT THE PEOPLE



MAKE SPACE TO DISCUSS, ASSESS AND MAKE CHANGES TO HOW YOU WORK



IF YOU COUNT THE WRONG THINGS, YOU DO THE WRONG THINGS

THE PANDEMIC MADE US REALISE THE IMPORTANCE OF A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH



WE NEED THE RIGHT MEETINGS AND RESOURCES TO HELP PEOPLE WORK TOGETHER



Contents

Intro

'Walk in their shoes':
Learning from the Work Live
Leicestershire (WiLL) project

Page 4

01

Reaching and
supporting people

Page 6

02

Planning and
managing projects

Page 16



What Was Work Live Leicestershire (WiLL)?

Work Live Leicestershire (WiLL) was a Building Better Opportunities project working with unemployed and economically inactive people in rural Leicestershire from early 2019 to March 2023. It provided holistic support to help people move into paid work or formal learning. Alongside one-to-one support from a keyworker¹, participants were offered a range of activities, courses, and advice and information, to build their confidence and motivation, health and wellbeing, social participation, skills, and economic stability.

By the project’s end, of 1066 participants, 536 had moved into employment, self-employment, or job search, and 301 into learning or volunteering. Alongside this, participants had improvements in motivation, confidence and aspiration, job search skills and job skills, and managing health and wellbeing.²

Project participants, staff, and stakeholders who participated in the research for this and previous evaluation reports also described ways in which WiLL benefitted organisations and communities; these included

- helping charities to recruit volunteers, including where this was a critical need,
- raising awareness of and footfall in local services such as libraries and those

- offered by charities, and helping develop new relationships between services,
- working with other service providers to provide additional support to their clients,
- providing other agencies and services with local intelligence,
- boosting the local economy by helping residents into work, and
- helping local businesses to recruit local employees and to be more inclusive in their recruitment and employment practices.

Because the voluntary organisations delivering WiLL were already working with their local communities, community development efforts benefited from this synergy: ‘*the beauty of WiLL,*’ said one partner, ‘*was that sometimes [WiLL workers] were going out and they could align that work with some capacity building or looking at setting up opportunities.*’ WiLL partner organisations also benefitted: city-based partners were able to adapt and bring existing services into rural areas, including deprived rural wards. At the same time, organisations built relationships with new partners, learned new ways of working, and recruited new staff.

WiLL partners also learned what works well or less well in supporting people into work or learning, and in developing and running employability projects. This guide summarises key lessons learned. It is based on research with project participants, staff, and stakeholders conducted between November 2022 and March 2023, including an event where project staff and stakeholders shared stories of their most significant learning.³

¹ Keyworkers provided a range of support including advice and guidance, coaching, and help to access services.

² Krista Blair, George McGill, Dimitra Gkiontsi, Kay De Vries and Jayne Brown, 2021 Report of the Evaluation of the Work.Live.Leicestershire Programme (Leicester: De Montfort University, 2021).

³ Details about individual project participants and workers have been altered to protect privacy, but we have not changed details pertinent to the learning.

Establishing a collaborative partner network – Vista’s vision

This Good Practice Guide was commissioned by Vista, on behalf of the WiLL partners. Vista’s aim was not simply to deliver employment support, but to support local partnership working and strengthen local communities. As they explain, they believe that it matters what organisations deliver support to communities:

‘The WiLL project was always meant to be a coming together of local services and organisations. The proposal, when securing funding, was that a collective effort to widen the scope of employment support, under one umbrella, would prove most beneficial. This would ring true over the course of the WiLL project, from the very point of meeting participants, where they could illustrate that all bases were covered. Whether it was careers advice, job search and volunteering opportunities, self-employment advice, training, further education, coaching or mentoring, the facilities were there. As has been the case with a number of BBO

(Building Better Opportunities) projects, it was managed and hosted by a charity, with strong local links. What made the WiLL project different was that Vista, the leading sight loss charity in Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland, came on board as the lead partner. Further partnerships were forged with the Rural Community Council (RCC), who provided the outreach team that left a footprint in local communities. Upskilling of participants was taken care of by the keyworkers themselves, supplemented by training courses from the WEA Leicester and Leicestershire. Key working of WiLL project participants was also undertaken by Access All Areas (AAA) and B-Inspired, working alongside the team based at Vista. CASE, as a self-employment bureau, passed on their knowledge of social enterprise, while Voluntary Action LeicesterShire (VAL) provided a pathway to the voluntary sector. Through this partner network, the WiLL project gave itself the best possible chance of offering the most holistic and bespoke range of services possible. One WiLL project worker said: “It’s been a privilege to share in the experiences of growth. In many ways, the blueprint is now there for others to follow.”

“...a collective effort to widen the scope of employment support, under one umbrella, would prove most beneficial.


 The logo for Vista, featuring the word "vista" in a dark blue, lowercase sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a graphic element consisting of a grid of orange dots of varying sizes, arranged in a pattern that suggests a network or data points.

Reaching and supporting people

Being there: build local knowledge and presence



What did WiLL do?

WiLL was targeted at smaller rural communities, and workers recognised the importance of going to where rural people lived, rather than expecting people to come to them. Workers had a local presence: they visited neighbourhoods and posted on social media; held pop-up sessions at local libraries and halls; visited other community services such as food banks and hostels; put up posters in local shops and supermarkets; and attended community events.

Venues can be scarce in rural areas, and workers learned to research suitable spaces in local communities where they could meet with project participants. Workers would also do the legwork to know about local employers and local sources of support

for things such as wellbeing, money advice, and IT. Partners who tried different ways of allocating work found that having a worker assigned to a specific 'patch' could not only ensure local knowledge but also save on time and travel expenses.

What difference did this make?

Being visible in the community, and having a physical presence, meant that residents who were not necessarily being targeted by the project knew about the service, enabling word-of-mouth referrals.

Multiple channels: avoiding one-size-fits-all outreach

What did WiLL do?

WiLL had a dedicated outreach team who worked face-to-face in local neighbourhoods. As a local stakeholder commented, people *'want to physically see someone. And I think that's where we need to be getting back to as representatives of voluntary and council services... we need to be seen again.'* WiLL workers were also able to visit smaller rural communities in a mobile coffee van that was operated by one of the partner organisations. This enabled workers to promote WiLL in a no-pressure way to residents, while providing a safe, enjoyable way for people to meet others.

At the same time, because WiLL needed to reach a wide range of people, the project was promoted on many different platforms, including billboards, buses, radio, and social media. Workers found that different things worked to reach different people and at different times – for example, weather and the time of year appeared to play a part in how busy drop-in sessions were.

WiLL made frequent use of local libraries as spaces to engage and work with participants, as these were quiet, had no pressure to leave, were on bus routes, and had internet, toilets, and useful information and events: *'most people know where those are and can get to them easily.'* However, libraries don't suit everyone, and in other cases workers drove out to meet people in places such as supermarket cafes.

HOW TO REACH PEOPLE



OUR BARISTA VAN HELPED US TO GET WHERE OUR PEOPLE WERE

What difference did this make?

WiLL workers said that reaching those most in need was an ongoing challenge, and emphasised the importance of making a good first impression. Flexibility was key to this: for some participants, virtual support overcame barriers to travel; for others, being able to meet in a safe, familiar space was key.

Help others to help you: building strong networks

What did WiLL do?

Will workers understood from the beginning that a good way of reaching people was to have other organisations refer people to the project. As the national evaluation of Building Better Opportunities found, if an organisation already trusted by a service user was supportive of a programme, this could help to engage that person.⁴ WiLL workers provided written information to and/or met workers in other organisations who were supporting local people. WiLL also ran sessions co-located with other organisations, such as holding a surgery at the organisation’s premises. One organisation described the benefit of having WiLL workers visit their service: *‘Part of our discussions are we can refer you for benefits advice and debt counselling . . . [but also] Are you hoping to get back into work at some point, or are you looking for a job? They say yes. And I say, we know somebody who can help you with that.’*

When there were strong relationships between frontline workers, or networks were well established because a WiLL partner had a history of working in the local area, this facilitated referrals.⁵ A stakeholder explained that because WiLL undertook a ‘triage’ or assessment of what kinds of help a person needed, they could refer their clients even when that client wasn’t clear about the help they wanted.

When external partners did not have a clear picture of the WiLL service offer or how WiLL worked with people, referral worked less well. Some referrers advised that face-to-face meetings explaining the service would help with this.



“ They say yes. And I say, we know somebody who can help you with that.

What difference did this make?

Referring organisations described how being able to refer to WiLL expanded what they could offer their clients, either complementing their services or providing an alternative when other options weren’t suitable. The value of having a wide range of well-established public and third sector networks and referral partners was highlighted by the Covid-19 lockdowns: when direct community-based outreach was interrupted, WiLL could still reach people via referrals.

⁴ Ecorys, Building Better Opportunities Evaluation: Annual Report June 2018 (National Lottery Community Fund, 2018), 9.

⁵ Shephard and Moyes Ltd, WiLL Developmental Evaluation: Learning Report (unpublished, 2020), 7.

It takes time: an open door and going at the person's pace

What did WiLL do?

Within the constraints of the project's time-limited funding, workers had freedom to spend the time they needed with someone, including before a person joined the project. Workers described taking time to speak to people about the project, even if they weren't eligible for or willing to join the project at that point.

Workers had participants whose journey was not linear, but full of starts and stops; workers emphasised the importance of being tenacious when key working. One worker described participants who struggled with their mental health, but wanted to make a start towards change:

'... a participant who repeatedly dropped out of contact, I... was often worried for their wellbeing, most of the time communicating only by text message. An invitation to join a local drop-in group was arranged and I started to meet them there, after several months they started volunteering locally. In between times they regularly dropped out of contact... and then resurfaced in terms of contact and we then negotiated for these same people to give them another [volunteering] opportunity.'



What difference did this make?

Workers described people joining the project a considerable time after their first contact, including when their circumstances had changed. Time also enabled keyworkers and participants to consider and pursue different routes into work – for example, participants wishing to start a business might explore several different business ideas. And for those participants who struggled, as one keyworker explains, *'people achieve in different ways and at their own pace...'*

The right job vs. any job: understanding people's needs and goals

What did WiLL do?

WiLL's participants and workers described support working well when workers understood the participants' circumstances and priorities, so they could source support and opportunities appropriate for that participant. *'They [WiLL] help to focus on volunteering and jobs in the areas I want to work in... the job centre I feel only cares about you getting into work regardless of what the job actually is,'* wrote one participant.

At the start, WiLL workers would have conversations with a participant using the Work Star™, a case working and outcomes measurement tool. Using this tool, they carried out a holistic assessment of needs, discussing topics including confidence, health and wellbeing, housing and finance, and soft skills. Having a tool helped them have difficult conversations about sensitive topics, and to set goals with participants in a transparent way. The initial assessment was reviewed at intervals, helping the worker and participant to track their progress. However, the tool is not a substitute for an effective worker-participant relationship and must not be done as *'tick-box'* exercise.

“ They [WiLL] help to focus on volunteering and jobs in the areas I want to work in...

What difference did this make?

WiLL found that the support that people needed was not always obviously employment-focused, such as needing training in job skills. Rather, people could be skilled but need support with problems such as social isolation, mental wellbeing, or disabilities, to move closer to employment.

LISTEN AND ELABORATE



WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND
THE NEEDS & WANTS
OF PEOPLE WE WORK WITH

Relational support: supporting confidence and motivation

What did WiLL do?

WiLL keyworkers linked participants to a range of services, but also provided direct practical and emotional support. Workers planned support in collaboration with participants. They found that helping participants set and achieve smaller, manageable goals towards a long-term aim, and providing time structure, was an effective way of supporting motivation. In the words of one worker, *'when I messaged [my participant] about our next meeting, he suddenly became enthused to do more... meeting me regularly made him become more accountable to himself.'*

Workers acted as coaches, and were a source of feedback for the jobseeker, including, as one keyworker put it, offering *'alternative perspectives to eradicate any growing negative assumptions.'* When a participant was experiencing anxiety, they could also provide *'hand-holding'* support, accompanying participants to appointments or activities, helping them to build the confidence to do this on their own.



FIND OUT WHAT THEY WANT TO ACHIEVE AND
BREAK IT DOWN INTO **BABY STEPS**

What difference did this make?

Participants told evaluators that they valued the collaborative, trusting relationships with keyworkers, as well as more practical help with job searching. Collaborative approaches to setting goals can lead to more motivated and intensive job seeking activity.⁶

“ when I messaged [my participant] about our next meeting, he suddenly became enthused to do more...

⁶ See, for example, Edwin A.J. van Hooft, Greet Van Hoyer, and Sarah M. van den Hee, 'How to Optimize the Job Search Process: Development and Validation of the Job Search Quality Scale'. *Journal of Career Assessment* (2022) 30(3), 474_505. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10690727211052812>

The right job, not just any job: volunteering as a route to work and education

WiLL workers used volunteering to support participants in different ways. One keyworker, describing a participant who found a job through contacts made whilst volunteering, explained that volunteering had helped his participant in several different ways:

'I had a case of a participant who had lost confidence and had many years out of work... My participant had different ideas of things that he could pursue career wise but wasn't sure which would be the best. As he was very anxious about being back in a work environment, it wasn't easy to decide where to start.

My suggestion was to start to volunteer to find out more about the sector and role in which he wished to work, gaining work experience, more knowledge about what that role required, as well as confirming if that was the type of employment that would be rewarding to him on a long-term basis.

“ I had a case of a participant who had lost confidence and had many years out of work...

The participant found a volunteering role... which he enjoyed and as a consequence, enrolled on a course, gaining a qualification and knowledge that he could utilise in his role. The participant was doing ever so well, and as a result had a boost in his confidence levels, he enjoyed working as a part of a team and supporting people. After a short while the participant managed to gain employment on a permanent basis.'

The keyworker as navigator: providing choice and guidance

What did WiLL do?

WiLL provided participants with a range of services and activities through its partnership, including courses, coaching, and advice and guidance in job searching and business start-up; workshops and courses supporting health, wellbeing, and a range of skills; and help to volunteer. Having these different services enabled holistic support and avoided participants having to go through assessment or sign-up processes for individual services.

Keyworkers were not limited to using services provided by the project. Workers leveraged their organisation's existing relationships with other organisations and invested time in researching and building new relationships with external services, so that they could link participants into additional activities and support. However, this worked less well when a needed service – such as mental health support or specialist benefits advice – was in short supply.



“ Having these different services within the project helped provide holistic support

What difference did this make?

Keyworkers helping participants to contact and receive support from other services was important, as, in the words of one stakeholder, *‘the person who needs it [the services] isn’t in a position to be able to do that. If they were, they probably would be working for [WiLL].’*

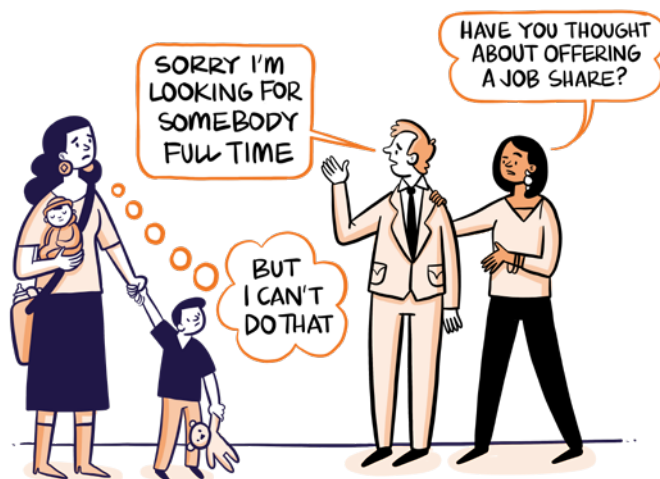
Whilst not something that the WiLL project did, some stakeholders suggested that if WiLL and other services had had arrangements in place to share information on participants’ support with each other, this could have increased coordination of support.

Supporting equality and inclusion: tailoring support and helping workplaces flex

What did WiLL do?

WiLL worked with unemployed people with advanced degrees and people working on their basic skills; with young people and older people; with people with disabilities or health conditions; and with people who had never worked or almost always worked. Whilst some keyworkers specialised in working with young people, most didn't have specialist knowledge of demographic groups. Instead, when a worker had a participant with a learning difficulty, mental health need, or sensory impairment, they would listen and research adaptations. This worked best for one-to-one support; for courses or drop-ins, it could be more difficult to tailor activities. For instance, people with anxiety did not always feel able to participate in busy group settings, although workers would assist by accompanying participants.

Because keyworkers liaised with prospective employers, they could also encourage employers to be more flexible: for example, when helping a Ukrainian refugee who had a trade but no UK qualifications, the keyworker rang round to employers, until he found someone who would give him a work trial. Workers also found that being able to provide in-work support could help address difficulties encountered by a participant in their new job.



What difference did this make?

WiLL workers described taking referrals from other services because they could flex with the person when others could not. *'It was more of a personal approach, and I think the work that they did with clients was a lot more. It was a lot more in depth than we could do. And so they stayed with them longer than other services,'* commented one stakeholder.

Planning and managing projects

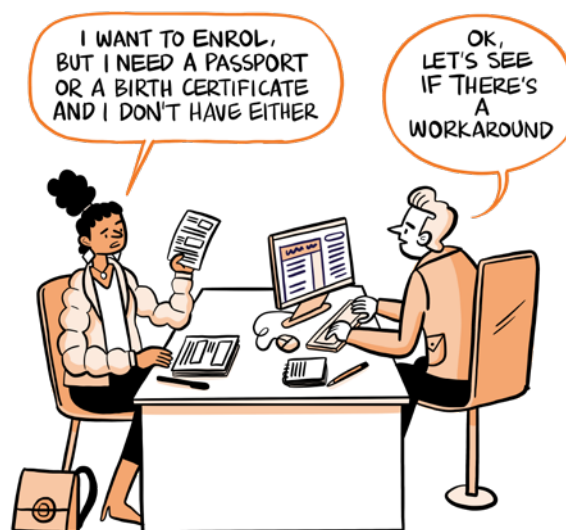
Planning projects: fit processes to people

What did WiLL do?

WiLL workers encountered situations where project eligibility criteria, processes, or geographic boundaries hindered people getting support. People who had work, even if they needed more suitable work, weren't eligible to join WiLL. The project sought to include disadvantaged people, but funders required identity documents and other evidence that some people did not have. Someone might need two services, one from WiLL and one from another Building Better Opportunities project, but funding restrictions meant only one project could be paid for working with them.

As well, sometimes participants' support needs, or their access to existing services, did not fit WiLL's planned provision. For instance, WiLL did not plan to offer mental health support, but some staff would have preferred for WiLL to have provided this in-house. Needs also changed: with Covid-19, WiLL shifted support online, but found that some participants had lost access to the Internet due to libraries closing and the high costs of IT equipment or Internet access.⁷

WiLL workers responded to these issues by investing time in helping participants navigate project requirements: one keyworker described liaising with a young person's DWP coach for several weeks before successfully signing them up to the project. Workers also located resources for participants that the project hadn't originally planned for, such as sources of donated IT equipment.



What did WiLL learn?

WiLL's experience underlines the importance of project funders and planners both understanding how projects will fit together with other services on the ground, and exploring whether project requirements and processes are appropriate for the intended beneficiaries.

However, funders and providers should expect that even carefully planned projects will have to change, as was the case during Covid-19. In these cases, providers being able to make changes and have them approved quickly can help maintain person-centred support.

⁷ Krista Blair, George McGill, Dimitra Gkiontsi, Kay De Vries, and Jayne Brown, Evaluation of Work.Live.Leicestershire: Covid Report. (Leicester: De Montfort University, 2020.)

Targets and indicators: measurement shapes what you do

What did WiLL do?

The WiLL project had agreed targets with the funder for numbers and types of participants, and numbers of participant exits to learning, job search, or employment. In turn, partner organisations each had targets agreed with the lead partner.

WiLL found that when targets only allowed one partner or one Building Better Opportunities project to count a participant, this could discourage cross-referring and drive competition: as one stakeholder put it, projects *'were all chasing the same people'*. WiLL reviewed its outreach approach to help address this issue.

Alongside its targets, WiLL measured and recorded changes or *'soft outcomes'* for participants in skills, health and wellbeing, financial/household stability, and motivation.



What did WiLL learn?

WiLL found that choices about what is measured and reported can have unintended effects. On the one hand, some WiLL workers and stakeholders thought that the emphasis on reporting numbers could discourage supporting people who were the furthest from the workplace. Organisations experienced a pressure to get certain numbers of participants through the project; the quantitative targets did not recognise or reward people for working more intensively or for longer with participants with higher needs. While approaches that build a person's employability can lead to more sustainable employment, this may not achieve an entry to work within the lifetime of a project.⁸

At the same time, WiLL found that collecting information on *'soft outcomes'* such as improved skills or wellbeing helped both workers and participants to understand if they were making progress before reaching the end goal of an exit to work or education.

⁸ Colin Lindsay, Ute-Christine Klehe, and Edwin A.J. van Hoof, eds. "Work first versus human capital development in employability programs" in *The Oxford Handbook of Job Loss and Job Search*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199764921.013.029>

Mobilising projects: make space to test and adapt

What did WiLL do?

The WiLL project was planned and opened to the public very quickly. Whilst launching the services, WiLL managers and staff were working with new systems and processes, and sometimes doing things in ways that were new to their organisations. As one manager describes, at the start of the project, nothing was in place, and *'trying to set up systems that would meet the extensive requirements of the funders... it was really hard to do. And then it's the issue of trying to get staff in post... I guess in an ideal world for me we would maybe have had... Some kind of lead-in period where we could have really started to unpick and get that stuff ready and feel a bit more confident and clear about what the requirements were.'*



What did WiLL learn?

Several stakeholders have suggested that the project would have benefited from a piloting or testing phase before opening its doors to the public. However, this had not been possible because of the tight timelines for delivery. Moreover, before a successful funding bid, charities and community groups often lack the resources to invest in a lot of preparatory work.

WiLL staff were able to review and improve ways of working as they continued to deliver services, but this was enabled to a certain extent by the Covid-19 period, when there was reduced pressure to meet targets. Future projects should consider how to re-create the 'space' for reviewing processes that lockdown offered.

Reflecting on and redesigning processes

As workers and managers used new – and sometimes complex – systems and processes, they were able to identify better ways of doing things; as one WiLL worker describes, be prepared to be proven wrong:

'During the early days of the WiLL project there were a lot of processes which we thought were the correct way to do things... But as time went on myself, managers and keyworkers noticed that these processes were failing and not working efficiently enough. We were losing participants because the sign-up process was taking too long... keyworkers were signing up the participant, putting the information on Charitylog [the casework database] and also key working the participants. There was a lot of pressure on them, and it took away from what they really should be doing, that is, key working. We noticed this and realised there would need to be changes and we would need to revisit these processes so we could retain more participants and not have them disengage...'

A lot of the changes were made during the Covid period where we had time to reflect and understand what was working and what wasn't... not everything is as straightforward as it seems, and sometimes you need to refine processes and the way things are done'.

“ We were losing participants because the sign-up process was taking too long...

Covid-19: How locking down brought workers together

During the pandemic, WiLL managers and workers needed to find different ways of working, and different ways of staying in touch. Meetings shifted from more formal, face-to-face meetings to more frequent, less formal online ones. As a WiLL manager describes, the pandemic was a catalyst for new ways for workers across the partnership to work together and share learning.

'It was March 2020, the start of the pandemic where we were plunged into lockdown, naively not knowing this would be our lives for many months to come.... How would the project continue? How would we support people? How would we continue to work so well as a partnership? How would I juggle my homelife to work life? We all had so many questions which no one had the answer to...

What I did need to do was reassure my team and other colleagues even if I didn't have all the answers just yet. This started with setting up regular meetings over Teams with everyone to keep us all connected, talking, sharing messages, what's working, what's not? Giving people an opportunity to offload

“ How would the project continue?
How would we support people?

any issues and highlight any successes; most importantly supporting and working in partnership with each other. These regular meetings were instrumental in keeping team morale, continuing to work as a wider team, collaborating and keeping people engaged during such a difficult and uncertain time. As time went on, the meetings became more structured, with set agendas and topics of focus; continuing to run to this day but now on face-to-face basis.

I personally learnt the importance of team working, listening to ideas and suggestions, staff morale and motivation and staying connected.'



Partnership working: resources and meetings matter



What did WiLL do?

The WiLL project required partner organisations to take on new systems and processes very quickly, whilst meeting targets. Coordination and partnership working could take a back seat in the context of these challenges. *'It took a while to work out who was doing what,'* said one interviewee. *'There was some duplication.'* In the early days of the project, some workers were not clear what services other partners offered.⁹ Several stakeholders described partners being concerned with hitting their individual targets rather than with partnership working: *'there was a huge kind of fear'* around targets in the early stages of the project.

During the pandemic, WiLL had to respond quickly to keep services running. As part of this, it developed new shared resources for partners. These included online resources to help with rapidly changing guidance and processes, and a centralised booking system for partners who needed Covid-safe rooms in different parts of the county. Staff also initiated more frequent and informal frontline-worker meetings, which increased communication and facilitated cross-referrals within the partnership.¹⁰

WiLL also made changes to how the partnership made decisions and managed contractual relationships between partners. A new partnership board supported more transparent, collective decision-making.

⁹ Krista Blair, George McGill, Kay De Vries and Jayne Brown. Interim Report of the Evaluation of Work.Live.Leicestershire (Leicester: Institute of Health, Health Policy and Social Care Research, De Montfort University, 2019), 43.

¹⁰ Shephard and Moyes Ltd., Work Live Leicestershire Developmental Evaluation. Learning Report November 2020, 7.

Contract management was separated from this, and supported by regular meetings between the lead body and each partner: *'I guess what we quickly learned was actually there needs to be some kind of real partnership and that has to flow ... the one to one meetings... meant that actually, you're not talking always in an open forum, but you can just talk about your own specific targets and it's got nothing to do with the wider "how we're going to get signups?" It's just about your organisation as a delivery partner.'*

What did WiLL learn?

WiLL's experience highlights how putting in place tools and processes to support communication, coordination, and shared decision-making strengthened partnership working in a way that formal agreements by themselves had not. This supports the experience of other Building Better Opportunities projects, who found that lead partners providing guidance and/or tools to partners and having ways to keep them up to date on changes, helped organisations to manage complex requirements. As one stakeholder pointed out, there needs to be *'an acceptance of the time it takes to develop a partnership – it is not just about having partnership meetings and telling people there's a partnership.'*

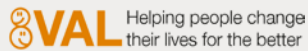
HELLO I'VE GOT
BEN HERE WITH ME,
I THINK HE MIGHT FIT
YOUR PROJECT





The Work Live Leicestershire (WiLL) project is funded by the European Social Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund.

Our partner network included:



Report contributors:

