



CASE STUDY: North Kirklees Wellbeing Yoga



Umbrella Yoga CIC

TSL Kirklees:
Well Connected Fund

Third Sector Leaders Kirklees is a charitable incorporated organisation, charity number: 11622592.

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

We delivered 40 yoga sessions to people across four venues in Kirklees: Batley, Ravensthorpe, Dewsbury and Heckmondwike. The sessions targeted communities with high proportions of migrants, many of whom have underlying health issues and mental health difficulties such as anxiety and depression. The yoga sessions were designed to support people to manage these struggles, as well as connect with others from their communities. The sessions were mid-week, during the day, so ideal for people at home who may not regularly leave the house.

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

A total of 85 people came to at least 1 yoga session (most of these came regularly to several sessions). The participants were from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, age groups and genders. The overarching factor bringing the participants together was that they experienced some level of mental health challenges and / or feelings of isolation.

The staff involved were 6 different yoga teachers, all with a different approach and background. One volunteer supported with contacting participants.

We collaborated with Welcome Mentors, Ravensthorpe Community Centre, and Social Prescribing Networks to ensure we reached a wide range of participants.

“They have been incredibly important for my mental health and I would be lost without them.”

“I have loved everyone in the yoga classes, the yoga instructors are brilliant and so lovely. It has really helped me a lot - thankyou”



“It has helped me with mental health and helped me trying to socialize a little . It's been the Best thing I have done with yoga, thank you so much for all what you have done”



3 THINGS WE ACHIEVED

1. We brought individuals from different backgrounds together to share and enjoy a positive, rewarding and new experience. The community spirit and pleasure of meeting new people in a safe space was very apparent.

2. The yoga sessions helped people mentally, physically, and socially.

We asked all participants across the Kirklees Wellbeing Yoga project to provide feedback on a survey:

- 100% (16 out of 16) of respondents reported that the yoga sessions helped them mentally.
- 94% said they helped them physically (1 person was unsure).
- 88% said they helped them feel more connected to others (2 were unsure).

3. We ignited an enthusiasm and enjoyment of yoga in people, making it accessible and achievable for many who may not otherwise be able to take part.



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NEXT STEPS FOR PARTICIPANTS

- We are continuing the yoga sessions across all four venues; we have added an additional 2 locations (including a weekend time spot).
- The sessions will develop, to have more of a focus on mental health and techniques to manage stress and low mood.
- With regular attendance at the yoga sessions, the participants will experience increasing benefits as the yoga becomes more a part of their everyday lives.

OTHER LEARNING/FEEDBACK/COMMENTS

- Several participants commented on how the sessions helped them to socialise, meet other people and make new friends. Yoga sessions offer such a special place for people to connect, without judgement. The nature of the sessions allows them to relax and feel confident and comfortable.
- Our participants expressed a strong interest for these sessions to continue.
- To promote sustainability of the sessions, many participants have offered to make a small donation to help cover costs.

NEXT STEPS FOR GROUPS

- Each venue has its own particular focus, e.g., 'Yoga Nidra' – which promotes deep relaxation, or 'Yin Yoga', promoting physical stretching and a calm mental state.
- One session (Ravensthorpe) is being extended to a 1.5-hour session, and wellbeing activities are now included (e.g., making eye pillows, journaling).
- Some of the groups are now exclusively for women to allow women of particular cultural backgrounds to practice in comfort, without fear of being observed by a male.

TSL Kirklees is the infrastructure support organisation for Kirklees, helping local charities, community and voluntary groups, and social enterprises grow, develop, and make great things happen that support local people and communities.

We take an asset-based approach to community-centred health and wellbeing and support local groups to create new offers and activities.

