

From 'Insight' to 'Being You'

Improving Men's Health @ Barca-Leeds



Barca-Leeds has a track record in pioneering and proving the value of specialist men's work. Central to this are new partnerships, networks and services designed to empower men by connecting them with each other and to community activities that improve physical and mental health.

Insight Community Research

2011-12: Leeds Public Health Suicide Audit findings recommended consultation with local communities impacted by suicide.



2013-14: Barca-Leeds led the first Community Research Project focused on suicide in ...



LS12

The area with the highest rates of male suicide in Leeds.



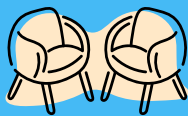
As a result of the consultation with local men the priorities for action were to:



- Increase the awareness of crisis support services in Leeds



- Deliver positive activities aimed at vulnerable men to combat social isolation



- Support and encourage men to engage with other services and opportunities



- Set up a 'Head Space' course in conjunction with Oblong aimed at men in the target group

Armley resident Mark considers suicide 3 or 4 times a week. He's had suicidal thoughts most of his life since 9 or 10, when the abuse was occurring.

Charlie's story



51 year old man, previous career in public transport, now unemployed.

Has mental health issues and feels unconfident and very de-motivated. Wants to retrain and learn new skills.

Outcomes: He said he felt more confident and was able to leave the house. He has signed up for a college course, was connected with the Lifelong Learning Centre at Leeds University which will provide extra information and support in pursuing his career change.

Was supported to learn new skills and get online to find support services, college and education opportunities.

Building Social Connections

From 2015 to the present

New Wortley Men's Walking Group building social networks, friendship and support in a safe space.

Leeds Community Foundation funding for project work that started up West Leeds Men's Network & the first International Men's Day Event in Leeds.

Men's Digital Inclusion Group & Men's Songwriting Group at Broadlea Community Centre.

RISE HIGH Tower Block Support Project reaches in to Wortley Tower Blocks with high numbers of single men to help reconnect them to services and each other.

Community Engagement Worker (Men's Health) appointed to continue group work in LS12 & LS13 areas.

Members of the Barca-Leeds West Leeds Men's Network shared their 3 word descriptions for Mental Health Awareness Week 2023.



Bringing People Together

2024: Men's Health Awareness Month featured Men's Health Unlocked & Being You Leeds collaborative events.

2023: West Leeds Men's Network music group perform at the Northern Man Festival for Men's Health Week.

Spotlight: 2016's 'The State of Men's Health in Leeds' by Alan White was the first detailed study at a citywide level in the UK to focus on Men's Health.



2025: Men's Health Unlocked launch 'Manthology' on International Men's Day with Q&A to a 'Lived Experience' panel, Open Mic session and Time to Talk Day 'Mental Health Myth Busting' with men from Leeds.

2025: Being You Leeds Men's Song-writing Group perform their commissioned song 'Here I'm Staying' on Suicide Prevention Day in support of the Baton of Hope.

2023: International Men's Day party including music, spoken word and community engagement. The Men's Talk Digital Group in Leeds shared what gets them through the day for World Suicide Prevention Day.

2019: Barca organised Leeds's first public International Men's Day open event in Bramley featuring talks, music and health information.



Networks, Partnerships & Social Change

Barca
LEEDS

Mark Baker from Barca-Leeds met men in pubs, betting shops, cafes and on street corners in Armley to talk to them about mental health and suicide in 2014. It felt very risky as it was a completely taboo subject at that time. We didn't have the language or the social permissions that we have developed now, or the big attitudinal changes - for example the Baton of Hope National tour. We are pleased to have played a small part in the societal and cultural changes that encourage everyone to acknowledge problems and talk more. This feels ever more important as some dialogue in society can feel, for men and everyone, challenging to the progress being made.

Ian Pepper
recorded this
video to
introduce the
West Leeds
Men's Network



July 2019

Set up West Leeds
Men's Network

August 2020

Men's Health
Unlocked project and
brand begins with
funding from The
National Lottery

April 2022

Publication of West Leeds Men's
Network service booklet

West Leeds Men's Network



- Day Trips



- Music group for enjoying, playing, writing lyrics and music



- Weekly tea and coffee "Time to Talk Sessions" with guest speakers



- Walking Groups

Men's Health Unlocked

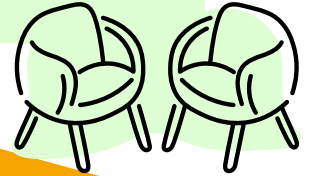
- Peer-led social and mental health support groups
- Sports and fitness including Park Run, 5-a-side football
- Northern Man Festival featuring free health and wellbeing activities
- Creative activities such as writing poetry which was compiled into the Manthology Zine



Continuing the journey

Spotlight: Anger Management Group

Barca-Leeds ran YAYA (You & Your Anger) group facilitated by qualified therapists which helped men to understand their anger and manage their feelings in different ways (2012 to 2020). The participants fed back that this was a genuinely life changing experience positively affecting every area of their life.



2025 -2026 & beyond

Mentoring in Schools Projects and groupwork with young men & boys supporting them with today's challenges and promoting positive male role models.

Our workshops evidence that young men will support each other when the language & context are meaningful to them - 91% made changes.

Partnering with Andy's Man Club to host a free, weekly, peer-led mental health support group for men at the Broadlea Community Centre in Bramley.

Barca-Leeds was honoured to host the start of the Baton Of Hope walk on World Suicide Prevention Day 2025.

June 2026: Barca-Leeds celebrates three year anniversary of working in the Being You Leeds partnership hosting Men's Poetry and Songwriting Groups.

Leeds hosts more Andy's Man Clubs than any other metropolitan area.

The Baton of Hope has raised awareness by engaging with over 100,000 participants during its nationwide community tours (Bramley, Leeds pictured below).

Key learning

- Men will respond to services that are designed with and for them.
- Focused messaging & support can overcome a lack of confidence in using primary healthcare services.
- Solutions to social isolation should also meet the most acute needs during evenings, weekends & bank holidays.

