

2024/2025 Annual Report



A year of resilience and determination

Our Impact

Clare - she has the supportive presence as well as all the knowledge in guiding us to set up a group.

1469 contacts (emails, calls, visits) over the year

Group Development

Our advice and support enabled groups to secure funding totalling

£416,610.99

20 new groups supported to become constituted

Clare has been our mentor and guide through this process and we couldn't have done it without her help.

Signposting to partners and other organisations - **2083** times

Even the first time I came, I felt some relief, I wasn't the only one.

3 amazing volunteers helping the groups run.

Bereavement

We had **134** referrals with the majority being self-referrals

113 group sessions took place

The group is a wonderful service, it welcomes people going through the worst pain with open arms, a listening ear, zero judgement and lots of understanding.

We ran **6** different groups

Been absolutely brilliant; helped me with loads. Can't fault anyone - everyone seems nice in the team.

66% decrease in individuals GP appointments since referral to SP service

Social Prescribing

598 referrals - an increase on the previous year.

9102 contacts (emails, calls, visits, texts) over the year

I would absolutely recommend it because of the positive impact it has had on my life.

I think it's a wonderful service!

A Message from our Chair

KAREN RIGG



The last year has been a tough one for the Voluntary Sector - there is no point in trying to disguise that. It has also been a year of resilience and determination. I am incredibly proud of all our team members, trustees and supporters, who have continued to work with positivity and commitment, adapting our services and delivery to ensure that the needs of people in our community continue to be met, and that we remain true to our core organisational values.

The CVS employed staff team is different now from the team we had twelve months ago. Several staff have moved on to new opportunities, and the roles that they fulfilled so ably for us have, in most cases, needed to be adapted to match the resources that we now have available. As an example, some of our recent bereavement team members are working on a freelance basis to deliver the service, as we are no longer always able to provide people with the security of a longer-term employed contract. This is working well for both them and us in this scenario at present.

Sustainability factors do inevitably change the profile of both CVS and the wider voluntary sector workforce. It is becoming increasingly difficult to both recruit and retain people with the skills required when we only have confirmed funding for a few months or a year, for example. However, this environment brings us brave, strong and innovative people with the confidence to thrive in any situation.

The statistics in the report speak for themselves. Behind each one is a person or group that has been helped and supported by the CVS team. These numbers keep on growing. The people supported by the Social Prescribing team for example are becoming more numerous and have increasingly complex needs, but the support they receive often changes their lives and frequently those of their families too. The service has also proved invaluable in sharing the workload of health services in the community.

All that we can ask as we move forward in the new world is that funders, statutory services, and businesses working in the community look carefully at what we are achieving, listen to the people who have benefited, value the work that we are doing, and finally, invest in our future.

Karen

Who we are...



High Peak CVS is primarily an infrastructure organisation which aims to support and empower the local voluntary and community organisations for the benefit of the local community. Through high-quality advice and support, access to training and funding advice we aim to strengthen and broaden the capacity of the VCSE network and improve the health, cultural, educational and financial wellbeing of the residents of the High Peak.

We are an advocate for the voluntary sector organisations and groups of the High Peak and surrounding areas, ensuring their views are heard and their successes valued. We campaign for wider recognition, sustainable and appropriate funding and a place in decision-making and planning.

When it is in the interest of the local community and High Peak CVS is best placed, we also directly deliver services and run individual projects which, in addition, support the financial stability of the organisation and therefore supports our core work.

Our mission is to improve the quality of life for individuals, groups and communities by enabling a vibrant and sustainable voluntary and community sector that's valued throughout the High Peak.

Staff

Ross Burnage	CEO
Jane Corke	Finance Officer
Donna Wren	Administrator
Clare Batchelor	Group Development Worker
Ben Rooth	Communications and Engagement Officer
Liz Fletcher	Bereavement Service Lead

Jess McFall	Social Prescribing Manager
Margherita Agrusa	On Duty Social Prescriber
Sam Longden	Social Prescribing Link Worker (Children & Young People)
Caroline Pollitt	Social Prescribing Link Worker (Children & Young People)
Nicki Chesworth	Social Prescribing Link Worker
Natalia Pettie	Social Prescribing Link Worker
Laura Garlick	Social Prescribing Link Worker
George Davis	Social Prescribing Link Worker
Rosie Deverell	Social Prescribing Link Worker
Rachel Wright	Social Prescribing Link Worker
Nicola Sutherland	Social Prescribing Link Worker
Liz Roberts	Social Prescribing Link Worker

Trustees

Karen Rigg - Chair	Sandra Higgins - Treasurer
Sandy Schofield	Sue Howard
Louise Carrington	Nick Mills
Steve Eccleston - Vice Chair	Nev Clarke (HPBC Representative)

A Message from our CEO

ROSS BURNAGE



I am pleased and proud to introduce this year's annual report which shows the breadth and scope of the work of High Peak CVS and offers the opportunity to see the contribution our staff make to this special part of Derbyshire.

As incoming CEO I arrived exactly half-way through the year that this report represents. I arrived straight into the sector pushing back against proposed Derbyshire County Council (DCC) funding cuts to voluntary/community organisations and day centres. CVS staff and trustees worked together to raise the public's awareness through local press and social media, encouraging High Peak residents to respond to DCC's survey about the plans.

Alongside all this, High Peak CVS continued its outstanding work. Our Group Development team increased the number of groups they worked with each month... with great success in helping them access much-needed funding. Our Bereavement Services increased the number of groups for people affected by grief, providing a much needed and valued opportunity for people to share their feelings and struggles. We remained an important partner to statutory health services. Our social prescribers supported clients by enabling them to engage with activities and services that are important to them - with a particular focus on improving the health and wellbeing of our community. The Living Well Collaboratives continued to facilitate collective conversations with diverse partners and to advocate for improvements to local community mental health provisions.

It was a year of challenges as well as achievements. The DCC cuts inevitably were approved and the funding environment continues to be challenging. The voluntary sector needs to do more with less, to adapt to the current financial climate and to the changing priorities of statutory organisations. ***High Peak CVS will ensure the needs of our community is at the heart of the work that we do and that we ensure the voices of our members and the wider voluntary sector is heard.***

We have an experienced and dedicated staff team, we are valued by our local statutory and voluntary partners and - most importantly - we are needed by our members and the clients that we work with. Remember the DCC survey about the proposed cuts to VCSE funding? The High Peak had the highest return rate of any area in Derbyshire. Residents and organisations recognise the contribution that the voluntary sector makes to the health, wellbeing and happiness of the area and High Peak CVS are proud to play a crucial part in this.

Ross

Community Development

CLARE BATCHELOR



In 2024/2025, the Group Development team had a memorable year. While it was a little tumultuous, we continued to grow and also had some awards to celebrate. Deb and Clare had been meeting more new groups, supporting them to take their first steps in setting up and watched established groups go from strength to strength. Our membership grew and with that we witnessed an increase in the diversity of groups' activities, aims and objectives.

We really believe that the High Peak voluntary community has it covered - and we are very proud of the work that is being done.

The Group Development Team enjoy meeting the faces of the voluntary sector in the community as much as possible and, again this year, there have been some great collaborative events.

The team attended the annual 'High Peak Together Event', for groups to come and show what they do, network and recruit volunteers in a table-top environment.

In April, Deb attended a Job Centre Volunteer pilot event - collaboratively organised with the Job Centre, in Buxton. The event was a great success for the Job Centre and many of our members who attended, connecting them to potential new volunteers. The volunteers were clients of the Job Centre looking for opportunities for paid or unpaid work to help them increase their skill set and confidence. Then in January, Deb and Clare attended the Job Centre in Glossop, at the 'Time to Shine' event of the same nature, looking at engaging people with volunteering to expand their skills and confidence to return to work.

Clare was also very honoured to be part of the Glossopdale Community Champions first Awards night. It was an amazing event and a celebration of volunteering in Glossopdale. Clare was a judge for the awards and had worked alongside a team of selected individuals to decide the winners prior to the event.



The event was filled with a red-carpet vibe, acrobats, food and drink, a market stall in the hall for voluntary groups and a photo booth. The Dark Peak concert band opened the event, and it was hosted by Adam Corbally, former 'The Apprentice' UK finalist and motivational speaker alongside Jo Gregory and Mat Gregory who founded the group and arranged the event with support from Chika Jones from Hummingbirds and Fi from the Bureau. Over 200 nominations across the 12 awards plus inspiring judges awards and the Mayor's awards. Each award was sponsored by a local organisation, and the whole event demonstrated the community spirit and volunteering efforts that go above and beyond across Glossopdale.

"It has been incredibly valuable to be able to talk issues through with someone outside the group and get an external perspective, particularly on our more strategic and longer term issues. Without this added impetus, I've found it can be very difficult to move these things forward because all our energies tend to be focused on the day-to-day. You also have masses of expertise and contacts - eg. on funding, structure, charitable status etc. Through the funding event you organised, we learned about Foundation Derbyshire and made a successful grant application and I'm sure there will be other funds coming in from sources we wouldn't have known about without your help. It is also useful to be able to draw on your experience of how other groups have handled things and what is possible and might be fruitful. It has all been really helpful."

There have also been other awards won by groups this year across the High Peak. Townend Community Garden, based in Chapel-en-le-Frith who have accessed CVS support for many years won the Land and Nature award for their gardens which promote biodiversity and green practices. They travelled to London to receive the award, one volunteer said: "It's testament to the vision and great work done by the team led by Mary. The garden is now a green oasis where children can come and engage in nature,"



Hummingbird Project winning the King's Award for Voluntary Service

Hummingbird Project had two big events this year – after working closely with Clare they officially became a CIO and they won the Kings Award for Voluntary Service. This award is an MBE for volunteer groups, and it recognises the hard work and effort put in by everybody involved, the volunteers, the trustees, the patrons and all that utilise and benefit from the service.



Townend Community Gardens winning the Land and Nature Award



Crompton & Woodcock Award Winners - Survive & Thrive

Our very own Crompton & Woodcock Award was won this year by 'Survive and Thrive' who are a support group for people with M.E., Fibromyalgia and other Post-Viral Fatigue Syndromes, such as Long-Covid. The group supports the families and loved ones of those who suffer with these illnesses and welcome them to our meetings. They keep in-touch between meetings in our members only WhatsApp group, have occasional guest speakers, do crafting days and much more. They also host events to raise money for relevant charities to raise awareness of the conditions.

Volunteers are key to our groups in the High Peak and the Group Development team have assisted over 20 volunteers through our enquiry form. In total, more than 100 different volunteering opportunities have been suggested for their consideration. We will continue to offer this service and support those looking to engage with volunteering to give back to their local community.

Funding for groups continues to be a challenge and we know many groups are disheartened by the amount of time and energy needed to keep on top of the opportunities, applications and reporting involved. Our monthly funding newsletter is available to all our full members and this is a service that we will continue alongside any bespoke searches needed for specialist projects. We have been building relationships with certain funders and trusts. This includes a new connection with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust which has led to some positive outcomes – including £44,000 from one family trust to eight groups working with children in the High Peak.

Overall, we have made 574 suggestions of funds to 243 groups culminating in a total of £416,610.99 of funding - that we know of - that has come from our support.

The development work we do with groups is about encouraging and empowering them to achieve their own aims and goals. We are proud of the groups in the High Peak and it is a pleasure to meet all the people that make it work.

"All the staff have been friendly - I mainly speak to Clare and sometimes Donna. They've really helped in every aspect of a small community project and I have really valued their support and having them made me feel like I'm not in this alone. Their advice and support has been invaluable to us."

Bereavement Support Service

LIZ FLETCHER



'I have really valued the safe, supportive and emotionally warm refuge of the sessions which has allowed me to survive the most challenging period of my life'

We are proud to report that our bereavement service continues to deliver a highly valued and much-needed service for adults in the High Peak. With six local groups meeting regularly we can ensure professional and compassionate group support is available at the hardest time.



Volunteer Gail

Volunteer Will

After two years with our service, our bereavement support worker, Karen, left us for pastures new. We acknowledge and appreciate the impact of her time with us. Our community presence is stronger for her outreach efforts. By taking over our referrals process, she increased our capacity enabling us to develop group resources, recruit new volunteers, write our grief talk and engage in new partnership work. Most importantly we were able to expand the service and open two evening groups. In March this year we launched our latest evening group in Buxton with an article in the local paper. We had plenty of interest and the group is now running as part of the service.

Our team has also expanded with some new volunteers. Anna now supports our Glossop evening group, Will supports our group in Chapel-en-le-Frith and Gail is working at our newest evening group in Buxton.

We are so fortunate that all three bring a wealth of skills and career experience, offering such a grounded presence and practical assistance. In short, they enhance our service immeasurably. Thanks also to Glynis, who has worked at the Buxton daytime group over the past year, and to our colleague at High Peak CVS, George Davis, who has volunteered at several groups this year. George has also turned his hand to skilfully editing some of our video promotions.

We were invited to deliver another talk on grief as part of the Grapevine Wellbeing Talks programme. Talks like this give us a platform to share our grief learning and hopefully contribute to a culture shift; towards one where we can talk openly about grief, accepting that grieving is a normal response to loss, a normal part of our lives.

Gaining support for our service, we have been in discussions with Percival's Funeral home in Buxton and we are delighted to be working more closely together, with a shared understanding and providing an easy referral pathway for families.

'Of course we come in the door looking for the answers and come away having somehow found our own. I want others to experience the support I have had. It was there for me and I want it to be there for others'

Chapel-en-le-Frith Golf Club and **Bright Opportunities** in Buxton have both very generously supported two of our groups. What amazing organisations, sincere thanks on behalf of all of our clients who benefit from the work we do.



Social Prescribing

JESS MCFALL



This year has been a period of significant growth, development and increasing demand for our social prescribing service. In 2024-25, we supported more people than in any of the previous four years since the service began, reflecting both growing demand and the strength of our evolving service.

The most notable development this year has been the launch of our Children's Social Prescribing Service. Developing this required significant planning, collaboration and groundwork. We piloted the service at the beginning of the summer holidays in July 2024, opening up to practices, to understand the types of referrals that could come through to the service. Following the pilot, we expanded the service across the rest of our Primary Care Network (PCN) and began opening up to referrals from schools, health visitors, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and other agencies from September 2024.



In January 2025, we also welcomed a new member of staff, Laura, to the team. Her arrival has helped us to extend our capacity, strengthen our client support, and bring fresh perspective and skills to our work.

Over the year, we have continued to see a rise in the number of clients experiencing severe or multiple challenges. More people are presenting with high levels of emotional distress, social isolation, financial hardship and other vulnerabilities. Many require longer-term support and more intensive interventions. Our team has responded by adopting a more flexible and creative approach to casework, ensuring that each individual receives person-centred, compassionate care.

However, the backdrop of this work has been a challenging one. The voluntary and community sector across the High Peak faced considerable pressures, particularly due to the loss of funding for many community-based services and activities. This has reduced the availability of community-based options for our clients and placed added strain on frontline staff. Despite the obstacles, we have remained committed to ensuring no one falls through the cracks.



In summary, this has been a year of both progress and pressure. The successful launch of our children's service stands as a major milestone, and despite external challenges, our team continues to deliver high-quality, compassionate support to those who need it most. We are proud of what we've achieved and remain committed to evolving and strengthening our service in the year ahead.

Social Prescribing Case Studies



Case Study 1 – Building bridges and reintegration into the community...

The client, a disabled man with a history of imprisonment and substance misuse, was living in unsafe conditions and struggling to access support. The social prescriber played a key role by supporting the gathering of medical evidence to increase his housing priority, securing a Blue Badge and disabled bus pass, and advocating across multiple agencies to overturn refusals of support and supported the client to have his PIP decision overturned. The social prescriber coordinated closely with multiagencies, ensuring the client was receiving appropriate support and helped him move into accommodation. Through ongoing support, the social prescriber encouraged the client to complete probation, stay drug-free, and rebuild family relationships, paving the way for stable housing and recovery.

Case Study 2 – Fostering greater positivity and community engagement...

The client was referred to the Social Prescribing service while experiencing low mood, isolation, and physical challenges following an illness. Living with depression and other long term health conditions they had been unable to work and had lost social connections. The recent loss of a close friend had also left them feeling “lost and low.”

The client shared worries about their health, finances and ability to travel to appointments or meet friends. Together, we explored what mattered most to them and identified small, practical steps to help improve wellbeing and confidence.

With support, the client applied for a Gold Card for free bus travel, which they said “lifted their mood” and gave them more freedom to visit friends and attend appointments. They were also referred to Live Life Better Derbyshire to support physical health, and to talking therapy to help manage their low mood. The client was also signposted to Citizens Advice Bureau for help with their PIP application.

By the end of our sessions, the client reported feeling “lighter” and more hopeful, saying that “things feel like they’re moving now.” They are now more confident travelling independently, have started engaging with local activities, and are working to rebuild social connections.

Case Study 3 – Providing both social connections and reassurance...

The client was living alone was experiencing low mood, isolation, and challenges with physical health and mobility. Her home held deep emotional significance, as it was where she cared for her late husband. She valued her independence but faced barriers to social connection due to limited mobility, hearing difficulties and chronic pain.

With support from the Social Prescriber (SP), several options were explored to help her feel more connected and supported. Although group activities and befriending were discussed, she did not feel ready to engage in these. Instead, the SP arranged practical and emotional support tailored to her preferences. Referrals were made to the Home Library Service, Derbyshire Low Level Support, Hearing Help UK and other local groups. The SP also liaised with her GP and community services regarding a hearing review and sourced information about accessible mobile phones to help her stay in touch with others.

All communication was carried out through home visits and text messages, as telephone calls were difficult due to hearing loss. The client expressed that she felt listened to, understood, and well supported, and she reported greater awareness of community services available to her.

She is now receiving ongoing input from Derbyshire Low Level Support and remains on the waiting list for the Home Library Service. With family assistance, she plans to attend a hearing review in person. Overall, the support has helped her feel more connected and reassured, with services in place to meet her ongoing needs.

Living Well Collaborative

MANDY GOODALL



2024-25 saw the final year of the Living Well Collaborative project, coordinated most recently by Mandy Goodall. Working within the High Peak and Derbyshire Dales, the project worked to integrate the Living Well Service (a community mental health provision) into our local VCSE community. Aiming to deliver the LWT vision to engage local communities in mental health reform.

The project facilitated honest conversation by arranging multi-disciplinary forums/collaboratives attended by all sectors who support mental wellness locally including: commissioners, statutory sector, voluntary sector, local authority and people with lived experience. These forums raised and answered questions, shared partnership ideas and gathered evidence for better ways of working. The final months of the project was spent trying to ensure that as the collaboratives came to an end that the different groups and individuals still had a space and an opportunity to have their say and contribute to future community mental health provisions.

The forums identified 14 priorities and, during the lifetime of the project, progress was made on 11 of these, which considering the varied background of the attendees (all with their own well-meaning agendas) we think this showed the benefit of the CVS to manage this process due to our experience of working between the voluntary and statutory sector.

The Living Well Collaborative was at times a challenging project, sitting between the voluntary and community groups/individuals and the statutory mental health services meant that CVS was acting as 'the messenger' often providing information each party did not want to hear. Although a valuable role that we performed well, this project has reinforced the need to consider the role VCSE infrastructure organisations (such as High Peak CVS) can play when working alongside such large organisations such as the NHS and how we protect our independence and impartiality during these partnerships

16 Collaborative Forums



249 Attendees

86 follow up actions from meetings



3 Meet the Groups events



Additional Projects



Social Connect

Social Connect aims to connect individuals to their communities and to services and groups that are available to them locally. High Peak CVS focuses on Fairfield, in Buxton, and the Hope Valley area. Using existing and new community links, this DCC Public Health funded project involves organising events and opportunities for communities to come together, engage with and learn about services which will reduce social isolation and improve health and wellbeing.

Community Voice

Community Voice was relaunched in early 2025 which allowed varied voluntary sector groups and voices to meet, share thoughts and ideas, challenges and successes. The forum has become a key voice to help us to ensure the sector is adequately represented in key decisions and strategic planning both locally and nationwide.



Public Health Small Grants

We promote, administer and award small grants in partnership with Derbyshire County Council Public Health. Our role as a bridge between Derbyshire County Council and local grassroots organisations allows us to ensure a diverse range of applications for funds that make a real difference to local groups who make a tangible difference to their local communities.

Climate and Nature and Energy Efficiency Fund

Working with High Peak Borough Council, we administer a fund to support activities and initiatives by local groups that contribute to the aims of the council's Climate Action Plan. This fund typically favours projects that take action to protect or improve biodiversity or takes steps to reduce the High Peak's impact on the environment.



Finance and Funding

We would like to say a huge thank you to all our supporters, donors, funders and members over the last year.

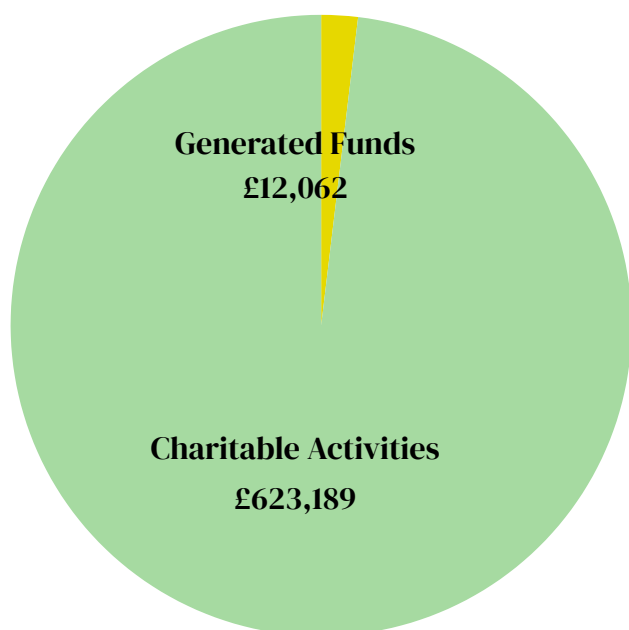
High Peak CVS's core funding from High Peak Borough Council, Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board (DDICB) and Derbyshire County Council (DCC) has allowed us to react to need, develop services and support our members and the community. The lack of long-term funding continues to make planning for the future and staff recruitment difficult, an issue highlighted by Derbyshire County Council withdrawing their core funding for 2025-26.

Our bereavement service is funded by The National Lottery Community Fund and we continue to develop plans for this provision's long-term sustainability. The Social Prescribing Service is funded by High Peak Primary Care Network who also see the value of CVS's wider group development role in relation to the Social Prescribing and improving community health outcomes.

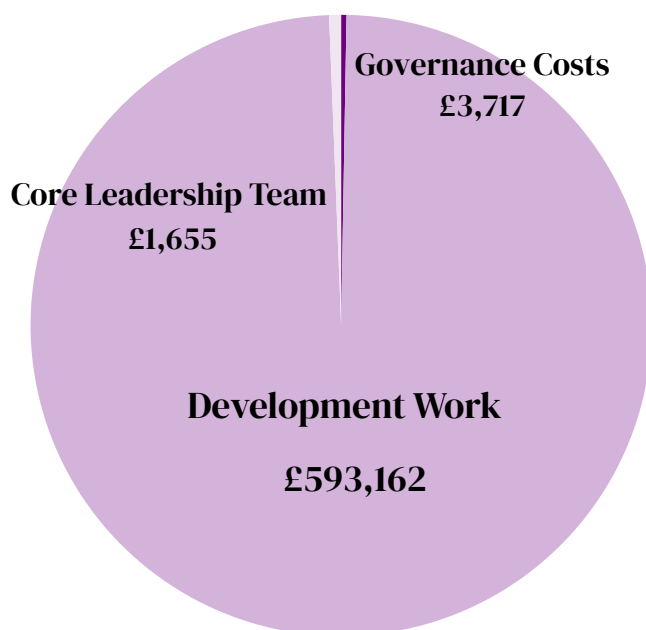
In addition to these key funders, the Living Well Collaborative, which completed in March 2025 was funded by DDICB, DCC Public Health commissioned the work supporting Social Connect and we received additional financial support from Foundation Derbyshire.

As an organisation, we aim to diversify our funding to make ourselves more resilient to the changing financial and organisational situation around us to ensure we can continue to meet the needs of our members and community.

Incoming Resources - £635,251



Total Resources Spent - £598,534



Thanks to...

All our members

and



Supporting our Bereavement Service



Gallery

Take a look at some of our 2024/25 year in pictures...





High Peak CVS Annual Report 2024/25

Get in touch

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