

Leicestershire Cares NEWS

ISSUE 2 - SEPTEMBER 2024



Message from CEO

As I reflect on our work over the last six months, my overwhelming feeling is just how much can be achieved when business, community, young people and the public sector work together so that everybody can thrive.

Our city and county continue to face many challenges, record levels of children living in poverty, lack of housing, and many struggling to pay their food and utility bills. Yet, every day through our work, I see examples of people coming together to offer support and to tackle these issues. This might vary from helping at a foodbank, providing football sessions for asylum seeking young people, or providing isolated and vulnerable young people with opportunities to develop their employability skills.

All of these efforts help turn despair into hope, and enable young people and communities to take action, bringing about positive change. As you read this newsletter, you will see examples of what this looks like in action.

I hope that this encourages you to consider getting involved in our work in a 'hands on' way by volunteering on one of our projects. You will be amazed at just how much you can learn and achieve in a day.

I hope that you enjoy this newsletter and as always, welcome your feedback.

#TogetherWeCan

Kieran Breen
CEO Leicestershire Cares



CELEBRATING SUCCESS

at Leicestershire Cares

★ ★ Awards Night ★ ★

We celebrated our annual awards evening in May at the magnificent Winstanley House in Leicester. In front of a full house of guests and nominees, it was a fantastic celebration of all that we've achieved across our successful partnerships with champions from the local business sector.

Kieran Breen, Chief Executive of Leicestershire Cares said: "Our vision is for an inclusive and safe Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland where nobody is left behind, and all children and young people are supported to reach their full potential.

"Our wonderful business members are helping us to achieve this through their ongoing commitment, passion and enthusiasm for volunteering and support of our work. We are grateful for their support and very much enjoyed celebrating with them."

Congratulations to all of our 2024 award winners including:



Digital Inclusion Award 2024

WINNER:

Samworth Brothers



Business Contribution to the
Youth Justice Project Award

WINNER:

Nelsons



Business Contribution to Work with Care Experienced Young People Award

WINNER:
Walker & Son



Business Contribution to Work with SEND Young People Award

WINNER:
Sytner Group



Business Contribution to Education Award

WINNER:
Cambridge & Counties Bank



Education Volunteer of the Year

WINNER:
Danielle Young,
Nelsons



Business Contribution to Community Development Award

WINNER:
Everards



Business Contribution to Festive Campaigns Award

WINNER:
Walkers Deli & Sausage Co



Business Contribution to a Community Group Award

WINNER:
PepsiCo



Rising Star of 2024

WINNER:
Roxanne George, Everards



Volunteer of the Year

WINNER:
John Neat, Walker & Son



Business Member of the Year

WINNER:
Everards

In addition to the awards, guests were also treated to:

- An inspirational talk from Will Neece, Headteacher from Brookvale Groby Learning Campus, sharing his thoughts on how important local business involvement is for employability education in schools
- A Q&A session between Councillor Deborah Taylor and a panel of care-experienced young people regarding their work around making care experience a protected characteristic
- A performance from Dah Gee Starz, a young performer currently being supported through our Power to Change Project

We also celebrated business members who have supported our work for either 5, 10 or 15 years with a 'Giving back to the Community' certificate:

5 years: East Midlands Chamber, Total Motion

15 years: Ford & Slater, ThermoFisher Scientific

And finally, we acknowledged businesses that have helped and supported Leicestershire Cares in other ways, outside of their business membership, with activities such as marketing support, the use of facilities, and health and safety advice – Nylacast, Sytner Group and Rock Kitchen Harris.

Spotlight on our

AWARD WINNING VOLUNTEER

John Neat Of Walker & Son, Samworth Brothers



At the annual awards, we were delighted to present John Neat of Walker & Son, Samworth Brothers with our prestigious 'Volunteer of the Year' award.

The award recognises the efforts and creativity of a business volunteer who has made a significant contribution to our work with communities and young people.

When he accepted the award, John said: "I am truly humbled to win this award and it is only possible due to the support and encouragement I have been given by my Samworth colleagues. It has been inspiring being here tonight, listening to so many wonderful examples of great work and am looking forward to doing more."

John's great impact at Leicestershire Cares

John is part of the community planning team at Samworth Brothers, making significant contributions to impactful projects such as Powering Up Football and community allotments for Mind Aid UK.

In the Powering Up Football project, John played a crucial role by securing a contribution of £1,000 towards pitch costs and essential resources, as well as encouraging shop floor staff to participate, ensuring the initiative's success. The project has provided opportunities for young people, helping them to overcome a range of challenges recognised within our Power to Change model.

Additionally, John and his team have been instrumental in helping Mind Aid UK, where they transformed an overgrown allotment into a vibrant space for learning, enjoyment, and community engagement. The allotment is intended to become a key venue for service users to access art, well-being and other creative sessions, whilst enjoying outdoor activities such as growing their own food and tending to wildlife.

Volunteering is fulfilling

John is semi-retired and now works three days per week. Reflecting on his involvement, he shared: "It feels great to give something back and get involved, especially working together with great people. It's wonderful to still work and volunteer. I don't do it for financial gain; it's the satisfaction of knowing that you're helping somebody."

"I enjoy the allotment and just got stuck into the project which is still ongoing. I will always try and help as much as I can to help improve the lives of those who need support."

Great work at Leicestershire Cares

Talking about his experience working with Leicestershire Cares, John expressed his admiration: "I don't know how they do it. The work they do is tremendous and the amount of people that it helps has totally shocked me."



Calling for **MORE SUPPORT** for Powering Up Football



Our Powering Up Football project has provided opportunities for young people to overcome a range of challenges, helped by support from a key business partner, Walker & Son and two passionate members of their team, John Neat and Tracy Renshaw.

Amy Cook,
Leicestershire Cares' Head of Children

and Young People continues the story: "We get many UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children) through this particular project, who are mostly from African descent - Sudan, Somalia, Syria - all living around the city and county. They tend to have no access to sport, they're not familiar with the community and experience barriers around recourse to public funds.

"We started working with the Freedom Group charity around three years ago now and up to 50 young people have come through via this route.

"We tend to self-regulate in terms of refereeing, organising and leadership, although have helped to train around five young men to become Sports Leaders at Level 2 and are looking to grow this number.

"Businesses do sponsor us - with shinpads, boots and more - and are bringing volunteers down to help by engaging with the communities.

"Walker & Son, who helped us to start all of this off (see story on Volunteer of the Year, John Neat, elsewhere in this newsletter) have a very diverse workforce and migrant employment plays a key part in their business. This gives them a sense of commonality with our young people."

We're currently looking for other business volunteers to come and play, ref or coach so if you, or a member(s) of your business are interested, please contact: amy@leicestershirecares.co.uk





TO EMPOWER VULNERABLE YOUNG WOMEN

Our new Empowerment Group for Young Women launched this summer. We're working with young women who are vulnerable to sexual or domestic exploitation.

During May half-term, we held a successful session for the empowerment group for young women with a diverse group in attendance including 15 young people, featuring five girls who had recently moved from Ethiopia.

Sarah from the YP project at Freeva joined us to deliver a fantastic workshop on self-esteem and confidence, a crucial topic for today's youth, especially amongst young girls.

Jaspreet and Carmen from DORCAS raised awareness about Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Many of the young girls were unaware of the abuse associated with FGM, making this an important learning and advocacy opportunity.

We also welcomed Danielle from Nelsons and Helen Kennedy from Leicester Police. Their presence and career journeys inspired many questions from the young girls and provided valuable insights into working in these fields as women.

One of the young people said: "I enjoy coming to these sessions as it's a fun day and always get to meet people I wouldn't usually interact with!"

LOOKING FOR STRONG WOMEN VOLUNTEERS

We're also planning talks with other charities on subjects including FGM, domestic abuse, spiking and more. We're also providing lessons in boxing, art and beauty to help with wellbeing, and increase their confidence and self-esteem.

The empowerment group is on the rise, uniting a vibrant and diverse group of young women who are forging strong connections and discovering incredible insights about themselves and each other. Empowering themselves and other young women!

We're now looking for more strong women volunteers to come forward to provide our group with good role models, give them aspirations and help to explore how they can become an empowered woman.

For more information or to get involved in the Empowerment Group for Young Women, please contact Krishna at krishna@leicestershirecares.co.uk

UPDATE

ON OUR

YOUTH JUSTICE WORK

Our youth justice work focuses on supporting very high risk, young people who have found themselves in the criminal justice system. Working with Turning Point, we work together to identify people who we can help to move back into education, training or employment, stopping them getting involved in any further criminality.

In the last year, we have experienced various successes as we supported participants in providing them with access to education, employment and training.

MOCK INTERVIEWS WITH PATHWAYS AND NELSONS



The team at Leicestershire Cares has hosted several employability sessions for participants. These sessions, including mock interview preparation delivered by Pathways, focused on equipping participants for their mock interviews at Nelsons.

Pathways works across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, providing help and resources for students, teachers, parents and carers to find out more about higher education.

A massive thank you goes to Ross Harrison, Strategic Outreach Officer at Pathways for delivering this invaluable session.

Ross concluded: "It was great to be back at Leicestershire Cares facilitating an interview skills workshop. I hope the young people found it helpful and I wish them well with their college and work interviews in the future. I look forward to working with everyone again soon."



INSIGHT INTO AUTOMOTIVE CAREERS AT SYTNER WORK TOUR

The team also participated in an work tour facilitated by Sytner, offering participants an overview of Audi's operations and the various career opportunities available within the company.

Sytner's General Manager, Shakil highlighted the importance of possessing the right attitude and a willingness to learn, emphasizing that these qualities are crucial when recruiting for these roles. The participants found the talk highly inspiring, with many feeling motivated to apply for the available vacancies.

Jessica Kalar, Recruitment Administrator at BMW/MINI Sytner Group commented: "It was great to see the young people show such an interest in the automotive industry and for them to see all the different career paths that they have available to them."



Can you help with **MAN CAVE** SESSIONS?



As part of this project, our Man Cave Enterprise sessions aim to show young men who may be struggling with employability, how they can become self-employed.

For this, we're looking for enterprising business volunteers, who may be involved in a trade or similar sector, to spend time with the young men, presenting them with positive male role models, teaching them new skills and offering a strength-based approach to transforming their skills into legitimate business ideas.

If you are a business and you would like to get involved in the work that we do by providing valuable work experience/work trials, please get in touch with our Youth Justice Project Development Manager, Chikodi at: chikodi@leicestershirecares.co.uk



Ensuring smooth post-16 transition for SEND students

We're working with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) post-16 young people who are due to leave college to help them to build sustainable futures, careers and lives.

By working on a range of areas including employability, ideas for moving on, carrying on in a new term and improving social provisions, our goal is to help students to make successful post-16 transitions.

We hold monthly socials with gaming, trips to restaurants, the cinema, theme parks and other recreational activity. We are helping to make new connections and ensure social functionality with interventions from carers and teachers.

VOLUNTEERS GO BACK TO SCHOOL



Through Altogether Now, a team of wonderful volunteers visited Forest Way School in Coalville to deliver a careers talk session for their SEND students.

A huge thank you to the fantastic volunteers:

- **Sue Woolett - Stepnell**
 - **Danielle Young - Nelsons**
 - **Sally Barnett - New Street Chambers**
 - **Simon White - Retired from Council**
 - **Barbara Green - SEND Student Support**
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All of these individuals took the time out of their busy schedules to go in to the school and leave a real impact on a class of SEND young people. Altogether Now, the schools and the students were extremely grateful for their time and efforts.

Sian Peat, Class Teacher at Forest Way School, Coalville said: "We had a visit from local businesses organised by Ross at Leicestershire Cares. I can't thank the volunteers enough as they were from a solicitors, construction company and barristers which our pupils would never usually have the chance to meet. Our students are 16-19 years old at a special needs school and the staff spoke with respect and appreciation for the pupils, and answered questions and described their job roles wonderfully. The pupils have been discussing the speakers multiple times over the past week and it really has left a lovely impression on them. We hope to work with Leicestershire Cares again on future projects to introduce our young people to the world of work and support them into adult life."

World of work tour at HRBS

Susan, Senior Finance Manager at Hinckley & Rugby Building Society (HRBS) and her team, welcomed Kym and Alfie, participants in the Altogether Now Project, to their finance department for a bespoke world of work tour.



Susan Icke commented: “It was an absolute pleasure to meet Alfie and introduce him to our finance team. They enjoyed talking to him about what they do on a day-to-day basis, sharing the varied routes in to their current job roles and their learning journeys, in particular their progression through accountancy qualifications. Alfie was enthusiastic and engaged and asked us some really good questions. I hope he enjoyed his time with us too.”

Alfie added: “I really enjoyed visiting HRBS and meeting Sue and the team. It feels a great place to work.”

Everards helps with interview techniques

Jenny Hailes from Everards held a bespoke mock interview for one of our Altogether Now participants at a local café. This was a relaxed interview over a drink, in a familiar setting to the young person, which allowed conversations to flow and our participant the time needed to showcase his skills, aspirations, hobbies and interests.

The Altogether Now participant said: “It was a great experience and it felt really authentic too.”

WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET INVOLVED?

We're looking for more volunteers to work with our SEND young people and are open to any new ideas from our business members. If you'd like to get involved, please contact Ross in our Children and Young People team at:

ross@leicestershirecares.co.uk



UNLEASH

YOUR INNER LORD SUGAR!

As part of our Education programme, we hold mock interviews and careers talks in mainstream schools, hosted by our professional business volunteers.

This year, we have launched a new online offer to every school in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland which will provide regular career talks, via MS Teams, throughout the academic year. By utilising technology, we can reach multiple schools and their classes simultaneously. This helps us to extend our voice and address the challenge of our volunteers who work from home or who don't want to travel.

Making a difference

One memorable week showcased the Leicestershire Cares team's impactful work as they delivered four events, including two interview technique sessions and two speedy speakers, with the support of 40 dedicated volunteers who reached out to 940 students.

The involvement of 40 volunteers in these events played a significant role in enriching the students' careers education. Their enthusiasm, expertise and willingness to give back to the community made a lasting impact on the students. By volunteering their time and knowledge, these individuals became mentors and role models, guiding the students towards a brighter future.

We were lucky enough to have volunteers from over 11 local businesses, including Hinckley & Rugby Building Society, Nelsons, Sytner, University of Leicester, Walker & Son, Saladworks, Cambridge & Counties Bank, CGI and Freeths.



Laying the groundwork for student success

We delivered an Interview Technique session at Limehurst Academy in Loughborough. The Interview Technique sessions are where we conduct mock interview sessions with a group of volunteers and years 10-12 who will be preparing for further education or training.



We run these events with the aim of providing students with an opportunity to engage with members of the business sector. We had 12 volunteers support this session - some from our valued business members such as Salad Works, Stepnell, Cambridge & Counties Bank and Sytner.

One of our education volunteers explained: "They are obviously putting the groundwork down for students to face the world of work but it was clear to me that most of the students have a good work ethic and they can only build on that. I met some really lovely students - it was a good effort and I hope they got a lot out of it."

Help us by volunteering your time

We're now looking for new and repeat volunteers to support us, starting in October 2024. It's a one-hour to half-a-day commitment but not only is it invaluable to the young people, it's also beneficial to our volunteers in terms of learning about recruitment and selection drivers, training in interview technique and providing mentoring opportunities.

if you, or a member(s) of your team are interested, please contact Bella at: bella@leicestershirecares.co.uk





SETTING THE CHALLENGE

for business members

Our Team Challenge programme is where business member volunteers can transform community buildings and outdoor spaces through one-day practical projects. They provide volunteers with the opportunity to give something back to their local community by undertaking projects that support the not-for-profit sector.

We work with a range of charities and community groups across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to provide employee volunteering opportunities that develop skills and understanding, and help strengthen community groups through a number of initiatives.

These physical challenges tend to have a DIY theme such as painting a room or garden furniture, renovating an outdoor space, weeding and planting a garden space, or creating a BBQ or sensory area, for example. We are also exploring opportunities within the 'green' sector such as clearing waterways. Larger teams are generally required to complete these due to the nature of the tasks.

Current team challenges available to support include:

Repainting the Gurdwara classrooms at the Holy Bones site in Leicester to make the rooms look brighter and make it a more comfortable, more welcoming environment for classes to take place for the community

Helping with building a shed and a basic outdoor toilet for the Diabetes Self-Help Group in Belgrave, Leicester to make the park safe, more user-friendly and appealing, encourage more people to get involved in the park and the activities, give new life to this site and create a safe space for participants and the local community

Painting the nursery and adjoining room, including doors for the Shama Women's Centre to create a welcoming, fun and engaging environment for the children to grow and flourish

Repainting the outside walls of the nursery area at the Woodgate Adventure Playground's main building and erect a new bamboo fence to keep the playground area vibrant and colourful, ensuring Woodgate remains a stimulating and fun space for young people

The finished results and transformations from these challenges are always amazing and can have a huge impact on the communities for a long time afterwards on a social, educational and emotional level.



GETTING CRAFTY



with SoundCafe guests

SoundCafe provides safe creative spaces for individuals who are homeless, have experienced homelessness, are at risk of homelessness, or are socially isolated and living in vulnerable housing. A small group of volunteers from Cambridge & Counties Bank offered to give their time, energy and expertise to run an afternoon craft session for the SoundCafe guests.

The volunteers supplied all material and used the time to instruct, assist and enable the guests to create wonderful hand made cards. The results were wonderful and everyone involved had a great afternoon.

A Cambridge & Counties Bank volunteer added: "We've really enjoyed our afternoon and would love to come back again."

EVERARDS COMPLETES

SENSORY GARDEN PROJECT

Holmfield Day Centre is a social care facility offering day care services for older adults, including those with dementia or other cognitive impairments who may require extra support and care during the day.

A team of volunteers from Everards completed the creation of a sensory garden for guests to enjoy and maintain. The team had prepared planters and pots, and emptied the existing pond in readiness for the day. The first part of the morning was spent filling and rejuvenating the pond, and planting the pots and raised bed with sensory plants.

“Thank you all so much, it looks absolutely fab, a job well done!” said a representative from Holmfield Day Centre.





Help from Walker & Son to

TRANSFORM ALLOTMENT SPACE



Throughout the past year, Walker & Son have worked closely with Mind Aid UK to completely transform an allotment space that will become one of the main venues for service users to access art, well-being and other creative sessions, while enjoying outdoor activities such as growing their own food and tending to wildlife.

What initially was overgrown land has now become an environment for learning, enjoyment and community. Due to the terrain and a particularly wet winter, there have been delays, necessitating the use of additional specialised equipment, all supplied and sourced by Walker & Son. The transformation process has involved excavation work, laying slabs, building fences and creating safe walkways, to name a few.

Rana, Service Lead, Mind Aid UK said: “Walker & Son have been amazing, absolutely brilliant and the service users will benefit so much from what has been created. Thank you.”

CAN YOU AND YOUR TEAM IDENTIFY YOUR

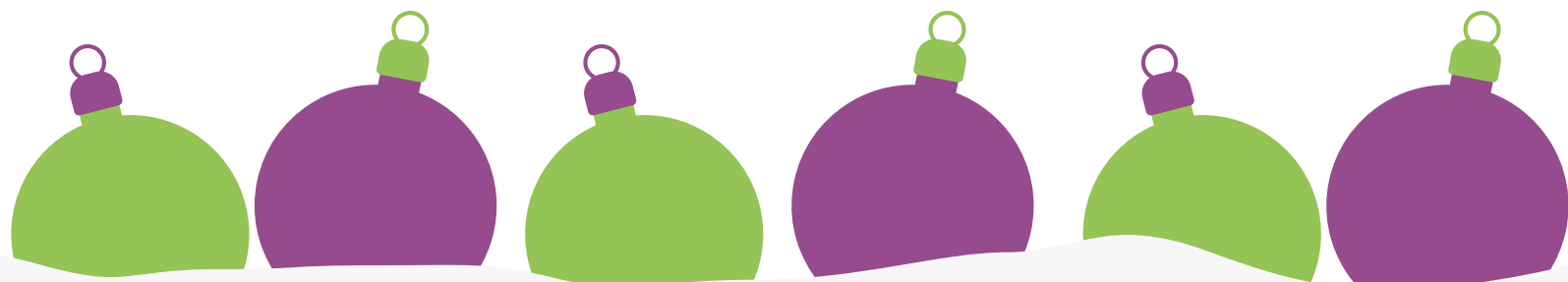
NEXT CHALLENGE?

In the run up to Christmas, we also organise Festive Challenges where business volunteers help to spread the Christmas cheer through festive activities such as Bags of Hope, Toys on the Table, hosting parties and decorating community spaces.

Neetu Squire, Head of Community Development at Leicestershire Cares added: “Our Team Challenges programme offers business member volunteers the opportunity to give something back to their local community by undertaking projects that support the not-for-profit sector.

“We want to hear your voices, and make it easy and fulfilling for you to volunteer, so get in touch and we can work out how you and your business can support.”

If you have any new ideas of challenges that you’d like to set up, or for more details about the Team Challenges that are currently available, please get in touch by contacting: neetu@leicestershirecares.co.uk





SUPPORTING

FINANCIALLY AND DIGITALLY EXCLUDED PEOPLE



The objective of our Moneywise Living project is to provide one-on-one support sessions to help financially and digitally excluded individuals become more resilient and better equipped to deal with life challenges, particularly with the increasing energy costs and the general cost of living.

With the Moneywise Living Project, we will continue to help with housing issues and benefit advice. Some of the key priorities are getting business members to work with our community groups, delivering sessions to participants about topics which would be beneficial for them, such as how pension pots work, how smart meters work and how to budget their money properly.

If you would like to find out more or get involved with our Moneywise Living project, please contact: neetu@leicestershirecares.co.uk

ENABLING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH THE 'POWER TO CHANGE'

At the heart of Leicestershire Cares' Power to Change approach is the belief that we need to work with young people in a joined up, agile and holistic way that is rooted in partnership working and a solid understanding of the local place and context. It is also based on the belief that young people are often best placed to know what is best for them and, given support and encouragement, they can become 'creators' rather than just 'consumers' of services and solutions.

Whether it's promoting energy efficiency, getting involved with podcasts and other multimedia work, indulging in your passion for the creative arts or others, we're looking for volunteers to get involved in areas that may be of personal interest to them.

If you would like to find out more or get involved with our Power to Change project including multimedia, podcasts and creative work, please contact:

neetu@leicestershirecares.co.uk



SHARING SKILLS

CHANGING LIVES

If any of the above has interested or even inspired you, then please contact us to discuss how you or your colleagues could share your skills and knowledge with young people and community groups. There is so much need and #TogetherWeCan really make a difference.

CONTACT US:



www.leicestershirecares.co.uk



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Email Us



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