

Burley Lodge Centre: Impact Analysis.

What impact does the work of the Burley Lodge Centre have?

In September 2010 the Burley Lodge Centre (BLC) embarked on a ChangeCheck impact exercise carried out independently by bassac (now merged with the Development Trust Association to form Locality). Below is the summary of the findings.

About the Burley Lodge Centre

The Burley Lodge Centre started in 1983 and provides services to the local community including legal advice in welfare benefits, debt and housing. We also work alongside young people to develop participatory activities that they have pride in and ownership of including co-ordinating and delivering open access free play sessions in NW Leeds. To help deliver this work we run a personalised volunteering programme developing skills, confidence and qualifications in the local community. In addition, within our building we house specialist facilities (including kitchen, crèche, IT suite, training rooms and dance studio) to run our own activities and to cater for the needs of community groups. This also allows us to host local MP and councillors' surgeries, and many other public meetings



The core values for the centre are enabling and empowering people, working with them to develop inclusive, accessible opportunities to learn and progress, through excellent customer service and professionalism allowing the Centre to harness our pride in and passion for the community and by helping the community reach its potential. We aim to have a sustainable, lasting impact.

Why we wanted to know more about our impact

We were keen to discover more about the qualitative outcomes of our work, to explore and evidence the difference we make to the lives of people that engage with us, and in the wider community. This stakeholder analysis is crucial to helping us plan a strategic direction that is fit for purpose in meeting the needs of our communities. We wanted to get an overall picture of our impact as an organisation to enhance the evidence we have of individual programme impact and to get an up to date idea of what our stakeholders think of us. In addition we wished to engage with the local community, whether current or potential users and raise our profile in the local area.

These are the eight areas where we feel BLC's services have most impact: Community Cohesion and Involvement; Economic Wellbeing; Education and Lifelong Learning; Health and Social Wellbeing; Community Building; Focus for services and activities meeting local needs; Home for community sector supportive of development; Bridge between community and state.

Using a nationally recognized impact assessment tool we surveyed our adult users, young people 13-19 years old, children 5-12 years old, staff, volunteers, the general public, room hirers, non-users, and some of our most important external stakeholders to ask them how they'd rate our impact against these eight areas. We received feedback from over 400 people in total.

What we were told

Feedback was given under 8 separate headings:

Community cohesion and involvement

- 80% of 13-19 year old respondents said they'd met new friends
- "gives a communal sense and allows me to meet my neighbours"(AU)
- "You can make new friends" (5-12 year old)
- "I volunteered to get to know my local community" (Volunteer)

Economic inclusion/wellbeing

- "I was able to get help and advice about my financial issues and benefits; it's really helped me to deal with money issues "(AU)
- "Empowered me by giving correct advice – gave me more confidence dealing with creditors knowing what they can and can't do "(AU)

Offers support with training and work experience; education & lifelong learning

- 70% of 13-19 year old respondents said they'd learned to do new things
- 55% said BLC had helped them decide what to do when they leave school



- 65% said it's helped them with their school work
- "All the training and volunteering has helped me get a job I really wanted" (V)
- "My professional development is well supported and space is given to develop my learning"(S)
- "After volunteering and contributing I was offered a job" (V)
- "I gained the experience to enable me to apply for my Masters programme" (V)

Enhances the health and social wellbeing of individuals & community

- 70% of 13-19 year old respondents said BLC as increased their confidence and made them feel better about themselves
- "My mental health has improved significantly through volunteering and BLC has helped me through some very tough times" (V)

Is a familiar, accessible building with good facilities?

- "I can come to the group in a neighbourhood setting which adds to the experience. Easy access and easy parking helps"(AU)
- "The rooms for the classes are spacious and private" (GL)
- "The crèche facilities meant that half the class were able to attend" (GL)

Offers what other providers cannot, meeting local needs

- 75% of 13-19 year old respondents said they'd have nowhere to go without BLC



- "Without BLC the (drama) group would struggle to keep on its feet" (V)
- "You can make stuff you wouldn't be able to anywhere else" (5-12 year olds)
- "They do all the things other organisations can't do and get to places others can't reach" (ES)
- "The BLC is in a location which helps us to bring psychological therapies to this community" (GL)

Is a home for the community sector?

- "My ladies only feel comfortable in this positive environment"(GL)
- "The building has a caring atmosphere which aims to foster wellbeing" (GL)
- "It's important that mental health is addressed holistically, so a community setting is better than a clinical one"(GL)

Plays a strategically important role in the city; bridge between community and state

- Bassac summarised that the centre accommodates change, is always constructive but also honest about the challenges. It is very experienced, well established, forward thinking and can link local need to sub regional strategy.

What we're going to do as a result

Bassac concluded the assessment by saying "we'd like to celebrate the positive impact that BLC is having and the significant difference it makes to its service users. There is much congruence between the aspirations and actual impact of the BLC, and the emerging issues don't contain anything substantive, but rather offer a heads up on 'things to watch' rather than any fundamental weaknesses or discrepancies. In particular the feedback as a whole supports emphatically that BLC is providing very much what the local community needs. It is local, accessible, multi-service, familiar, trusted and relevant, and all of these things are valued by the local community and enhance the wellbeing of individuals who live there." However it was also reported that the BLC needs to do some work to scale up all the individual impacts into an interconnected whole impact on community wellbeing. Results were broken down into 5 issues with opportunities for development highlighted.

Promotion/publicity: Improve the website; promote annual report more widely and celebrate successes; make better use of social media.

Future direction: Further explore income generation and increased partnership working: Diversifying work streams: identifying synergy between programmes to deliver enhanced benefits.

Enabling the community to have a say: Improve the involvement of local people in articulating local needs and decisions - harnessing a wider range of voices; re-embed the community action element of its work without compromising its partnership work and service level agreements.

Making the most of relationships and partnerships: Develop shared messages and campaigns; share data and information and generally be more proactive through consortium working; operate at strategic level city wide with Children Leeds.

Follow up impact work Develop some harder, quantitative evidence around impact – e.g. community safety, economic wellbeing and housing.