



St. Leonard's
YOUTH & COMMUNITY CENTRE

Impact Report

2023-24

July 2024

The
Henry Smith
Charity
founded in 1628

Sefton Council



 **COMMUNITY**
FUND

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Acknowledgements





At St Leonard's, our team are committed to make sure Bootle people have somewhere to go, something to do, and someone to trust. I'm delighted that, despite challenges, we've succeeded in recording over 250 attendances per week at the Centre in the first year of our current Community Funded (Lottery) Programme, from July 2023 to June 2024.

Our staff team and volunteers have delivered a wide range of tailored programmes across areas such as our Men's and Women's Spaces, Kraft Hub, Cookery Classes, Walking Group, Foodbank, and weekly Community Lunch.

We have also continued to make sure the voices of Bootle residents are heard by those in a position to create change. In the face of cuts and a cost-of-living crisis, being able to help residents to speak up on the issues that matter to them is vital.

I want to thank our trustees for their support and active involvement in the Centre. And a big thank you to residents in the Bootle community who get involved with our activities, our service partners, all our funders and supporters, our staff team members and especially to our volunteer teams.

We couldn't do what we do without any of you!

Debbie Shelley
Centre Manager

About this Impact Report:

This report outlines the key elements of our Programme at the St Leonard's Centre from July 2023 to June 2024: what we've delivered (our outputs) and what difference these have made for our service users (our outcomes).

St Leonard's 2023-24

2. AIMS

1 To help to improve health and wellbeing in the local community

One of our core aims is to support people who use our Centre to improve their physical and mental wellbeing. We do this in many ways: not least by being a welcoming and friendly Centre, where everyone matters. We run many free, informal group sessions including our Women's and Men's Spaces which meets weekly and our Walking Group.. South Sefton Foodbank and Pantry are also run by the charity.

3 To provide a welcoming and friendly community venue, and reduce social isolation locally

We work hard to welcome everyone to our Centre. Our approach is to make sure everyone feels safe and relaxed when they come along to our activities. Key elements to do this includes our weekly Community Lunch - open to all, our Kraft Hub and a range of activities for older people.

2 To support people to develop their basic skills: including their communication skills

We are working with several other partners in Bootle to offer short sessions and courses which support people to develop their literacy, numberacy, digital skills and their communication skills. This year we have hosted a new literacy course with Collective Encounters - lots of budding poets here!

4 To empower people to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem

All our activities are designed and delivered to empower people to feel part of our community here - and to build people's confidence and raise their aspirations from the moment they come through the front door. We keep it informal - so everyone can get involved at their own pace and in activities they want to try.

It is vital that we can measure what difference our work makes to the people who use our services at St Leonard's. This is important for several reasons:

- so we can assess which services make a positive difference to our participants
- so we can report these impacts to users, trustees and funders
- so that we can review and develop our offer to make best use of the funds we receive from Community Funds and all our charitable funders, including Henry Smith Foundation and Trussell Trust.

3. How We Measure Our Impact

How are we measuring the difference we make?

The Community Fund is supporting us to develop our team skills to be able to measure our impact effectively.

This year we have been developing new methods and tools to collect feedback from the people who use our Centre and our service partners. We have agreed a monitoring and evaluation and use the new feedback tools on a regular basis.

This is being used to report our impact to people who use our services, to our trustees and to our funders.

Impact measurement progress this year: we are using new approaches to assess our impact

- **Who uses our services:** we have introduced a new registration form for use with our regular participants - so we know who they are and why they are using our services
- **What Works Well and Not So Well!** we have also introduced regular feedback opportunities across all our activities - and these feedback forms are complemented by informal discussion and in-depth interviews with participants so we can continually adapt our offer to make it as impactful as possible.

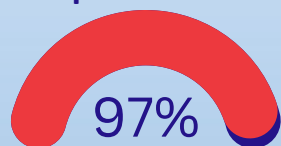
The collage features two forms. The top form is a 'Feedback Form' titled 'We want to make The Leonards the best it can be for everyone so please let us know what difference getting involved with this activity has made to you. Thank you!'. It includes a 'Women's Space' logo and a date 'Sept. 2023'. The bottom form is a 'Registration Form' from 'ST LEONARD'S YOUTH & COMMUNITY CENTRE'. It contains fields for 'Full Name', 'Full Address', 'Postcode', 'Phone number', and 'Email address'. It also has a section for 'What is your age?' with radio buttons for '16-24', '25-44', '45-64', '65-79', and '80+'. The forms are set against a background of a blue sky with white clouds.

The following Section presents the impacts made by each of the Community Funded programme activities.

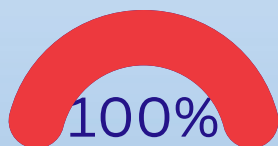
Meeting every Monday morning, the **Women's Space** has been a vital opportunity for Bootle women to meet up at the start of the week. But it's been a challenging year, as the Group has had to re-locate at short notice from its shop unit in The Strand Shopping Centre, to our Centre on Peel Road, due the new refurbishment plans for the Strand.

Despite this, a total of 385 attendances have been achieved with many women gaining confidence at this activity and then getting involved in the Community Lunch, Kraft Hub, Walking Group and volunteering with us.

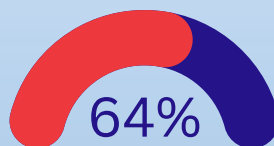
Our Impact:



reported feeling a lot happier as a result of attending the sessions



are pleased to have met new friends through the sessions



told us they feel a lot more confident as a result of attending - 36% a little more



has started to try new activities since coming along - and the same amount have learned new skills

“

Great to meet and talk and try new things. Its helped me with my mental health.

Coming to this group has meant I have met and made new friends and gained interests. Also with joining the walking group as well I feel fitter and happier.

I enjoy coming to the Women's Group as it gives me a routine and a reason to leave the house. I have enjoyed meeting new people, going on trips and learning new things

Its great that Women's Space meets weekly. A good mix of age groups and activities to try

4. Women's Space: Impact



Ms A. lives very locally to St Leonards and was introduced to Women's Space by a friend. Ms A lost her mum whom she used to care for – and many of her family have moved away from Bootle. She also fractured her knee at the end of 2023 - so was unable to continue her work as a barmaid so had been feeling isolated.

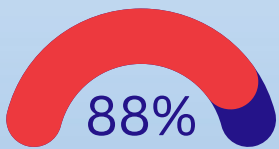
After looking at the website for info, she started to attend the group and has immediately been made to feel welcome by its members and staff. She has been attending regularly since Jan 2024 and has also participated in other activities such as the Walking Group. She commented:

‘There's lots going on at the Centre. It's on my doorstep and its like getting a family again! I know a lot of them by sight and it turns out I knew some of their family members. I feel close to them here and have met some really nice people. They're not in your face & very professional & welcoming.’

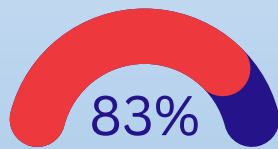
The Men's Space usually meets weekly on Tuesdays for a couple of hours at the St Leonards Centre. The aim of the activity is to get men together to socialise, find out about what's happening in the community, about local services and support, and also to have a free hot meal. On average, about 12-15 men attend weekly, varying in age, from 25 to over 70.

A total of 559 attendances were recorded for 2023-24.

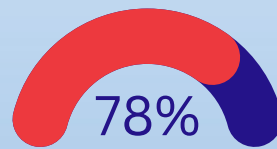
What Difference Does this Make?:



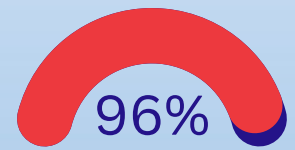
reported feeling a lot happier as a result of attending the sessions



are very pleased to be meeting some new people at the Men's Space



reported feeling a lot more confident since getting involved



are thinking about getting involved in other activities offered at St Leonards

This year 2023-24:

The sessions are hosted by our Community Development Worker and a key element of this is a free hot meal - prepared on site by our cook. Participants have enjoyed the informal structure of the sessions, and being able to have a cooked lunch.

“

'I really miss these sessions when they aren't on - coming here is important to me - it's a chance to chat with people and get a decent meal.'

'I have become a whole new person coming here. I had no way of dealing with anything before I came here and now I volunteer here in the Pantry and I have a paid work. I used to hate life and now I've learned to love myself and enjoy life.'

Men's Space: Impact



● **Mr D is in his 40's and started attending the Men's Group at the end of 2023.** He lives alone locally, and walks to the Centre. He feels that by attending these sessions and also coming along to the Community Lunch, he has grown in confidence in the last 6 months and is able to communicate much more effectively with people generally.

He has started to develop a lot more interests and hobbies - and attending the trips and the literacy group has inspired him to develop his interest in transport and also World War II further. He accesses info online and has been painting and drawing more recently as well. 'I'm finding that I am communicating and chatting with people a lot more easily by coming along to these sessions - everyone is really friendly and welcoming'

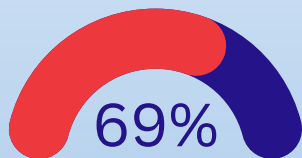
What Do we Offer?

Every Monday afternoon, the walking group meets at Bootle New Strand, to get out and about locally - walking along the canal and around local parks or the coast for 2-3 hours together. They have a break and a cuppa at the midway point. Our Community Development worker leads the group.

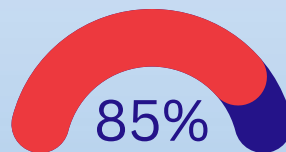
Several volunteers have now completed training with Sefton Council to qualify as walk leaders.



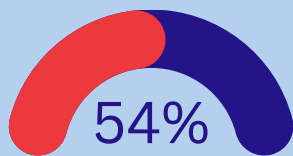
What Difference is this making to participants?



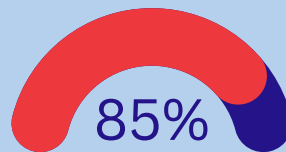
reported feeling fitter since joining the group



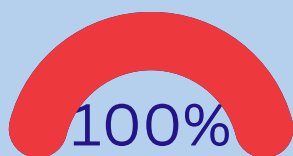
were pleased to be meeting new people by coming along



said that they had also started to walk a lot more at other times of the week



told us they had started to visit new places which they had never been to before



reported feeling happier as a result of attending the sessions

“

The walk has become a massive part of my life and I love going each week. I feel part of something positive for the first time in years.

I have qualified as a walk leader - I did the course with Sefton Council. Its great to see the change in people's moods when then start to come along to the walking group and join in.

Since coming on these walks my quality of life has improved beyond my imagination. Honestly I'd be lost without these walks. And now I am also involved in creating a men's walking football group.

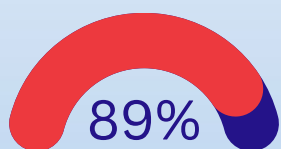


Our Cookery Course:

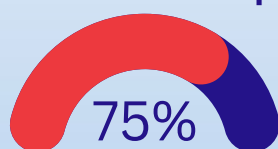
A total of 90 people (181 attendances) have participated in our Cookery courses this year, which runs regularly for 2 hour sessions over a 3 week period. Working in a group with our cook, participants use free ingredients provided to make a recipe and can either take it home with them or eat it with others at the Centre.

Cookery Classes: Impact

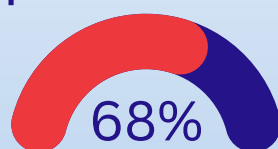
What Difference has this made for participants?



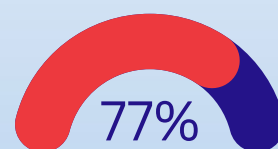
reported feeling more confident cooking from scratch now



told us that they were eating better, with their food budget



said they were now eating fewer ready meals & take-aways



reported that they were generally eating more healthily now

“

The recipes were easy, healthy and it was easy to find the ingredients. The recipes are quick to make which helps me because of my mobility problems. I'm now using ingredients I have never used before.

I've liked the interaction with the group members and the different foods that I wouldn't have otherwise cooked or tried.

It's been great to learn how to cook from scratch and how to make quick nutritious & healthy meals



Tom, in his 60's, attends St Leonard's regularly at the Tai-Chi sessions & chair-based exercises. Although he has basic cooking skills, he's always left the cooking to his wife, and commented: 'When I was offered a place on the cookery course I hesitantly accepted. The course was a revelation! Some of the dishes I cooked I had never tried and other ingredients and condiments I had never tasted. It was the small tips passed on by the chef that were the most helpful: how to cut an onion correctly; how to properly use a knife to chop veg.'

He also found the cost-saving tips helpful in reducing their food budget – for example no longer using ready-made rice sachets. He commented: 'I've learned new skills and grew in confidence with each new lesson... I recently made a Panzanella salad from scratch! Not a demanding dish but for someone who had never used garlic before in a meal... it was an accomplishment. We enjoyed it very much. If there is a follow-on course, my name will be first on the list!'

The Kraft Hub runs every Thursday for 2 hours at the Centre, with a total of 245 attendances over 2023-24. This is a popular activity with many of our Women's Space participants, who often attend both of these. At this session we have offered a variety of activities including trying new crafts and visits to craft centres locally.

100% of survey respondents told us they felt happier, more confident and had learned new skills by attending. Everyone had made new friends - a key outcome for them.

“

I so enjoy our weekly meeting - lovely group of people and such a nice atmosphere. A chance to make new friends. We have had the chance to learn new skills and that has encouraged me to look into other courses. We enjoyed a print workshop with a tutor from Cambridge Road Education Centre (nearby). I intend to sign up for a course there too. The fact that we are able to attend and it is all cost free is an added bonus. We are provided with all that is needed for each craft project

Have met lots of lovely people and enjoyed learning new crafts. We have also gone to some interesting places such as the Glass Works

Kraft Hub: Impact



Ms S is in her 30s, lives in Bootle and has been attending the Kraft Hub and the Women's Group since the start of 2022. Her self-confidence has increased a huge amount as a direct result. She found out about the group through her Household adviser who knew she was a keen quilter and enjoyed arts and crafts activities. She cared for her mother during COVID and has not worked for a decade prior to that. She started to attend the Kraft Group there and when it moved back to the Centre, she started to attend the Women's Space.

Since attending, Ms S. has made new friends with other women who also attend the group and started to volunteer at the Centre, supporting the Women's Group and the Kraft Hub on Thursdays with her new network. She explained: 'Before this I wouldn't say boo to a goose. I'm now really enjoying coming to the women's space as it has given me a routine and a reason to leave the house. I'm enjoying meeting new people, going on trips and learning new things. It's a positive way to start the week as its not too structured and we catch up together and it's a chance to have a chat as well.'

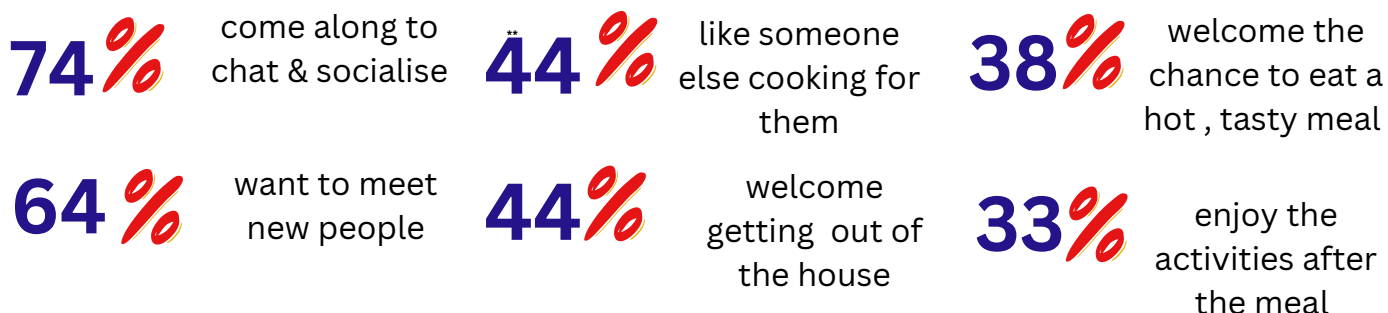
Recently, Ms S started to volunteer through running a new Sewing Surgery, undertaking small repairs for other people. She has now completed volunteer training in, First Aid and Safeguarding.

What Do We Offer?

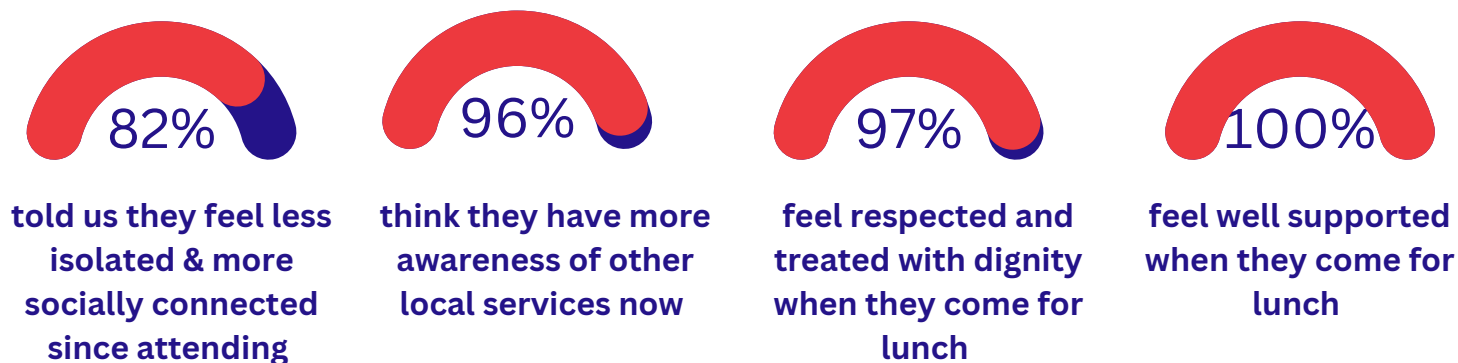
Our very popular Community Lunch runs every Wednesday where a hot meal costs £3.50. This year a total of 1185 meals have been served! 495 of those were free for those who also attend the Men's or Women's Spaces. Approximately 35-40 people attend each week. Everyone is welcome, including residents, service partners and staff.



People attend for the following reasons:



What Difference Has this Made?



The meal is varied, with friendly warm staff and non-judgemental. The bingo afterwards is fun and free and a chance to win a special bag of food. The meal and drinks are thankfully brought to the tables by staff and volunteers - a big thank you!

What Did we Do?

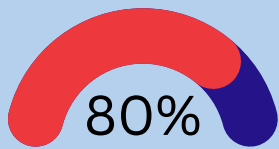
We held a 3 hour lunch-time Community Information session in May 2024, which was widely advertised. A total of 20 service partners attended, including Alzheimer's Society, Asda Community Champions, Citizen's Advice Services and Enterprise Credit Union, Taking Root, Affordable Warmth Team and Households into Work teams - to offer one to one info & advice.

A free buffet, and large heritage photo exhibition were also set up in our hall and Sefton Opera offered free hand, neck, back massages. A total of 81 people attended.

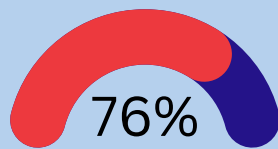
Annual Community Info Day: Impact



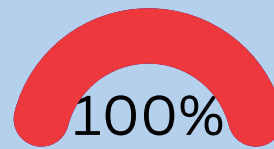
What Impacts Did this Event Make?



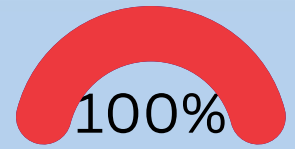
80%
of people attending
reported that overall
the Day was very
useful



76%
of attendees found
the individual
agencies very helpful



100%
of agencies
attending thought it
was well-run and
people were
interested



100%
of agencies
attending thought it
was well-run and
people were
interested

Attendees told us:

Great to be able to access all this free advice today in one place- very informative

It was a good first experience of attending the centre - thank you.

Excellent turnout -- would like to see same again autumn/ winter

Service Providers told us:

We found people very receptive to our services and also made some great links with other organisations

Very well organized with plenty of notification of event. Table provided, well publicised. Six people identified with high Blood pressure

The event was fantastic, there were lots of people who came along and many visited our information stall. The atmosphere was really positive and relaxed. We really enjoyed it and would definitely like to attend again if another day is organised

What We've Learned:

- a free buffet is a great engagement tool - it provides a focus for people & they stay for a longer period - but we may serve a little later next time
- Service partners also need to be proactive - 'work the room' by approaching people to engage them in a chat
- Practical support at the event : such as hand/head massages & goody bags to take away are popular!

South Sefton Foodbank works with a range of local agencies who meet people at risk of going hungry. Citizens Advice, children's centres and health visitors are just some of those who make referrals to our foodbank by issuing them with a foodbank voucher.

As part of St Leonard's Community Fund grant for 2023-2026, the Foodbank's Co-ordinator post has been supported. The Foodbank operates through 7 bases across South Sefton. A total of 53 volunteers are vital in the running this service across our communities at our 7 Distribution Centres and warehouse.

South Sefton Foodbank: Impact



Our Impact: 2023-24

Total number of people who received food: 14,369
9141 adults and 2228 children

Tonnes of food distributed:
124 tonnes

Total number of volunteers involved: 53

Total number of distribution centre volunteers: 43

Total number of volunteer hours: 1,872 hours

Total number of warehouse volunteers: 10

What we've learned this year:

- the main reasons for Foodbank use is the rising cost of living and the costs of essentials for many
- the majority are people who are not working and who have mental and physical health challenges
- people are needing to access the Foodbank more regularly - and are requesting many more vouchers per year to use it than the previous 3 to 4 each
- we are an active partner in two on-going Trussell Trust research projects - and are distributing survey questionnaires currently for its large scale Food Bank Survey. We hope to be able to access and use the research results to inform our work locally.

Our brilliant team of dedicated volunteers supports all our activities. Volunteers are a vital part of our team at St Leonards - helping to ensure the smooth running of the South Sefton Foodbank and our Community Activities Programme, including the Men's & Women's Spaces, the Walking Group and our weekly Community Lunch. Most volunteers are local residents and our team of volunteers includes over 60 people at any one time. If you'd like to volunteer, let us know!



**Total number of
volunteer hours
contributed by 61
volunteers over 12
months:**

**3722
hours**

Volunteers come from a range of ages and backgrounds, with many local residents getting involved to develop their own skills and confidence, and to get involved in their community.. All are looking to give back through helping to run the Centre. This year we have been able to offer our volunteers a wide range of 1 day accredited training, including Basic First Aid, Food Hygiene and Safeguarding.



Volunteer Case Study

Ms C has been attending the Women's Space since late 2019 after being told about it by her CAB adviser. Since joining, she has become a highly valued member of the team at St Leonards, now working as a volunteer and completing a range of training to support her in this role. She is now a key member of the Women's Space, the Kraft Hub & also supports the weekly Community Lunch. She says of her involvement as a volunteer at St Leonards:

I've made a few really close friends here at St Leonards. If you'd told me I'd be volunteering I wouldn't have believed you. It's kept my mental health stable. I feel much better being part of something. I was encouraged to come here and I felt better being part of a team. Its also nice and warm and we join in the Community Lunch as well. I've made loads of new friends and we meet up outside the Centre as well. Jo is brilliant – she will do her best to help anyone. She is caring without being overbearing and keeps us all involved. There's a lot of people who would suffer if these activities and sessions weren't here. I've not been told I must come here – it's my choice. I'm not being judged and I come here and feel safe and there's a comfort to being involved here – I feel part of it.'

We work with many local service partners and agencies in our daily work. Increasingly as the Cost of Living crisis has worsened over several years, many of the people who use our Centre have increasingly complex needs.

The implications of this for our service are substantial in terms of our day to day work and the demands on our services;

We make and receive many urgent referrals from services such as:

- social care agencies
- local mental health services
- social landlords
- primary care agencies
- other community based organisations

Our team members also responds to the needs of many residents who look to our Centre as a safe haven - people who need immediate advice, support and signposting. We work with service partners to respond to these urgent needs - for which we receive no funding - in addition to our usual programme of activities.

Our Service Partners

citizens
advice

Sefton

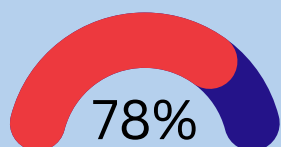
Living Well
Sefton

Sefton Council

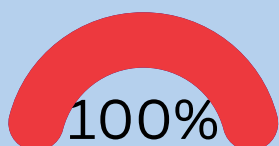


ECU

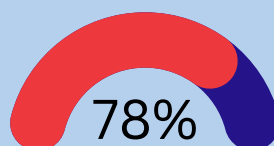
Enterprise
Credit Union



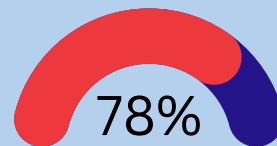
The team are
welcoming
& friendly



Report that
the team
communicates well



Definitely want to
continue to
work with St Leonards



Think that
St Leonards plays a
vital role in Bootle

We asked our partners their views about working with us over the past year:

“

St Leonard's is a valuable service provided for different groups in the local community with all age groups participating in different activities.

I find all of the team to be informative and pro active. It is a pleasure to work with them. They see the value in our credit union and are happy to share the information within their groups.

The Centre is an amazing resource for the Bootle community - it is a precious gem in the heart of the community. The team work so hard to support local people and their commitment and energy is fantastic. They also have so much knowledge about what is really happening in the local area and the issues affecting local people.

5. Successes

People tell us they feel welcomed when they come to our Centre - and this encourages them to return, and gradually start to feel more confident.

For many, the initial reason for engaging with us at St Leonard's is to be able to use the Foodbank or our Pantry. Or it's suggested to them by one of our service partners, such as the CAB.

We find that people then start to get involved in our other activities - coming along to the weekly Community Lunch, the Kraft Hub, the Men's and Women's Space or the Walking Group.

Our informal and friendly atmosphere enables people to feel valued and included in a new community or 'family'.

The combination of activities on offer at St Leonards appears to be working well currently i.e. food/eating; group engagement; and group exercise being the key elements.

So people feel less isolated, both mentally and physically fitter, start to learn some new skills - including how to communicate with others - and far more confident in themselves.

... & Challenges

The Cost of Living crisis has hit people in Bootle hard - and we have tried to make sure that we can keep our doors open to everyone who needs support.

The challenges facing many residents include increased costs of food and rent as well debt worries and mental health issues. Increasingly we have noticed this year that many of the people we support have more complex and multiple needs.

As a result, demand for our services is at its highest level ever - and our staff and volunteer team are hugely stretched trying to meet these needs. The team are spending a lot of time trying to support residents who are in crisis and feel they have nowhere else to turn to.

In addition, we have experienced high levels of staff sickness absence - so it's been a challenging 2024 to date!

We have also had to move our Women's Space unit in the Strand Shopping Centre at very short notice, due to its redevelopment. As a result, it's a juggling act to keep our varied timetable going with the space available at St Leonards.

6. Next Steps for Year 2 - 2024-25

- Review the format of some existing activities to offer a more structured approach - with more information & signposting activities as part of those
- Develop our core activities: Slow Cooker Course; Literacy & Numeracy courses; Walking Football; Digital Skills Training sessions; and a new Heritage Quilting Project
- Continue to upgrade our Activities' Information (website and leaflets)
- Make sure that the people who use our services can feedback to us through a wider range of methods - like regular feedback chats, forums and creative art-based sessions.
- Consider options to recruit and train volunteers as Impact Champions
- Look at our options in relation to space to host our activities

Registered as a Charity in England & Wales:

Charity number: 1129970

Company Number: 06775494

Chair: Rev. Paula Bridson

Centre Manager: Debbie Shelley

60 Peel Rd, Bootle, Merseyside L20 4RW

Tel: 0151 933 1300

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7. Thank You to:

All our volunteers - at the Centre & Foodbank!

Our Staff Team & Our Trustees

Our Service Partners across South Sefton



St. Leonard's
YOUTH & COMMUNITY CENTRE