



Moving On Lancashire Summary evaluation report

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CASE STUDY: Andy (participant)

Andy worked as a machine setter in an engineering factory before depression forced him to give up his job and sign up for sickness benefit. Although he wanted to find work, his Jobcentre Plus advisor thought it was too soon for him, and referred him instead to Moving On Lancashire.

At first, Andy found belonging to Moving On's groups too much. "Eventually they got on to realising I wasn't ready for going in to groups," he said, "so they started having one on ones with me, for a good few months, and then bit by bit they started introducing me in to groups."

Belonging to Moving On has let Andy explore his passion for art, something he studied at college in the past. "When I was working in an engineering factory it's always playing on your mind, that this is not what I wanted to do," he said, "that has got me realising that is what I wanted to do in the first place, but that's my aim, just stick with arts."

Andy feels that without Moving On he wouldn't have been recognised as suffering from depression. "When I first came I wouldn't have talked to no one or anything, and then it was only Moving On that referred me to a mental health centre and that is when I got diagnosed with the depression, severe OCD, anxiety problems and these things," he said, "so if it wasn't for Moving On, I wouldn't have got diagnosed."

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Introduction

Moving On Lancashire is a Big Lottery Funded Community Interest Company not-for-profit social enterprise aiming to counter adult social isolation and worklessness through programmes of group activities, one-to-one support, volunteering and return to work assistance.

With dedicated premises in both Preston and Skelmersdale in Central and West Lancashire, Moving On provides a bridge between inactivity, unemployment and low self-esteem on the one hand, and activity and engagement with local services on the other, and is experiencing increasing numbers of referrals from third sector and statutory agencies such as Jobcentre Plus, women's refuges, community mental health teams, drug and alcohol services, and housing associations. Although employment destinations do not form part of the project's formal Big Lottery Fund (BLF) outcomes, employment or improved employability for its participants remains one of Moving On's over-arching objectives.

Originally funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) under its Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities scheme, the project's staff identified a gap in provision by statutory and other third sector organisations for their particular client group. People who have received support from specialist agencies are often discharged into the community, they felt, without the self-confidence or self-esteem to be able to engage in learning, look for work or participate in communal activities.

With its LSC funding expected to finish in 2010, Moving On applied for funding to meet this gap from the Reaching Communities strand of BLF in 2009. In its application, Moving On identified its target beneficiaries as socially isolated, marginalised people referred to it by other third sector and statutory agencies. They predicted that some beneficiaries would variously suffer from mild or moderate mental health problems, or would be recovering from drug or alcohol misuse, or long term unemployment. The project also expected some beneficiaries to come from the Asian community, particularly in Preston, and that these people might suffer from isolation, language problems and, in some cases, domestic abuse.

In its application, Moving On asserted that most referring agencies saw it as a preventative therapy able to intervene and prevent more serious mental health issues, and through this, avoid the need for, and cost of, greater clinical support in the future. Moving On's application stated it intended to achieve this through:

- Engaging with the hardest to reach members of the community;
- Delivering one-to-one and small group activities to individuals as participants' confidence increases;
- Introducing volunteering and further education opportunities; and
- Preparing for employment by removing educational and psychological barriers.

The project committed itself to ambitious targets, with 600 people to benefit directly through the three years of BLF funding, and ten or more organisations to benefit directly during the same period. In terms of specific BLF outcomes, the project identified the following:

- Raise self-esteem and reduce isolation for 80% of the target group by the end of the project.
- Increase access to learning for the target group. Each year 75% of the target group will have accessed learning.
- Offer work experience through volunteering to strengthen communities. At the end of the project 20-30% of referrals will have undertaken work experience placements.
- Address the problems created by worklessness through increased skills. By the end of the project 80% of participants will have increased their work skills and their potential for employment.
- Improve self-confidence. 90% of participants will be more confident.

Evaluation method

The evaluation method was to tell the story of the beneficiaries of Moving On through data gathered on three levels, which together effectively form an evaluation pyramid.

Level One

At ground level, the journeys of the people who have been through at least some of Moving On's services and support were mapped through a survey collecting and synthesising quantitative data through an easy-to-complete, paper-based questionnaire.

Level Two

The themes and issues that emerged from Level One informed the development of instruments for a series of three focus groups:

- Participants of Moving On in Preston (8 female, 6 male participants).
- Participants of Moving On in Skelmersdale (7 female, 6 male participants).
- Project workers (8 female, 1 male members of staff).

Level Three

We supplemented these focus groups with a series of one-to-one interviews to animate our data reporting with individual stories, which form the photo case studies in this report.

A total of nine one-to-one interviews with participants have been conducted, five in Skelmersdale (two female and three male) and four in Preston (two female and two male). Two one-to-one interviews have also been conducted with members of Moving On's staff (one case worker and one tutor), and interviews with Moving On's partners and referring organisations took place during September 2012.

Data analysis

Data coding was left open during the analysis to capture emerging themes, and instruments were developed responsively as the evaluation progressed. Data were analysed using the qualitative data analysis software QSR Nvivo 9.2, and are reported under three distinct headings: the participants themselves, the project's staff, and Moving On's partners.

Separately to our evaluation, Moving On conducted its own survey of participants' vocational and educational destinations. The results from this were also analysed by the authors using NVivo 9.2, and have formed a supplementary data source for this evaluation.

Progress against BLF outcomes

Separately to our evaluation, Moving On Lancashire must report its progress against its BLF core outcomes on an annual basis. We have summarised below the project's End of Year Two report to the BLF, which provides a wider context for our evaluation findings.

BLF project outcome 1: By the end of the project 480 people from the target group will participate in group activity and learning and skills development, leading to raised self-esteem and reduced isolation.

Moving On reported that the pathways it offered its clients varied according to the needs of the individual, and might include one or more one-to-one sessions, one or more small group activities, progression to larger group activity and progression to volunteering or employment. Over the two years of the project, they said, a total of 419 people had registered with it, a figure that included some people who had been registered with Moving On before the BLF funding.

BLF project outcome 2: Each year 540 people from the target group will have increased access to learning, and will have accessed new learning opportunities.

Progress against this ambitious output target is difficult to measure precisely, as outputs from recently referred people will take some time to show up in Moving On's records, and may not appear until their end of Year Three, or final, BLF report. However, the project could report that, at that point, 237 people had taken part in a learning opportunity within three months of starting the programme, of whom 30 had progressed to an accredited course in further education.

BLF project outcome 3: By the end of the project 198 individuals referred will have undertaken work experience placements through being offered volunteering opportunities, leading to stronger communities.

Competition for work experience or volunteering opportunities has proved considerable. Nonetheless, 73 people have taken part in work experience or volunteering opportunities, and a further 13 participants whose physical or mental health was too poor to allow workplace pressure have been guided towards two social enterprises, both of which have been established by Moving On participants who have had similar difficulties themselves.

BLF project outcome 4: By the end of the project 480 participants will address the problems created by worklessness through increased skills, leading to increased potential for employment.

Three hundred and ten people have received initial assessments and taken part in a full Moving On programme, 229 people have received at least one one-to-one session with a caseworker, and 237 people have taken part in group work activity.

Literacy programmes were running successfully in Preston with 15 students, as was an introductory IT class with 28 students, Moving On reported, and an Ascentis-accredited programme to support people through to job-readiness was running in both Preston and Skelmersdale, with 22 students enrolled.

BLF project outcome 5: By the end of the project 540 of the target 600 participants report increased self-confidence having taken part in the programme.

Moving On measures progression against eight 'soft' outcomes for each participant, including: being job ready; initiative; listening and speaking; managing time; problem solving; self-confidence; self-motivation; and self-presentation.

In 2011 the project recorded 577 positive outcomes against these measures, and at the time of its end of Year Two report, had recorded 91 positive changes during 2012. A total of 114 people had improved their listening skills, Moving On reported, and 150 people had improved levels of self-confidence.

Evaluation findings

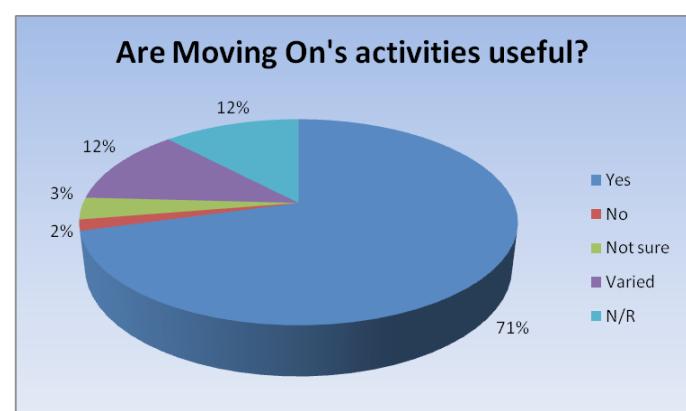
Survey results

Moving On Lancashire's participants were surveyed through a paper questionnaire, focus groups in Preston and Skelmersdale, and nine one-to-one interviews. Partners and staff were surveyed through a focus group, one-to-one interviews and telephone interviews. Data were analysed using NVivo 9.2 both openly and against key Big Lottery Fund outcomes. A total of 58 participants responded to our survey.

Evaluation subjects were broadly evenly divided between Moving On's centres in Preston and Skelmersdale, and were predominantly white, middle aged and female. Many considered themselves to have a disability, and the overwhelming majority had at some point used mental health services.

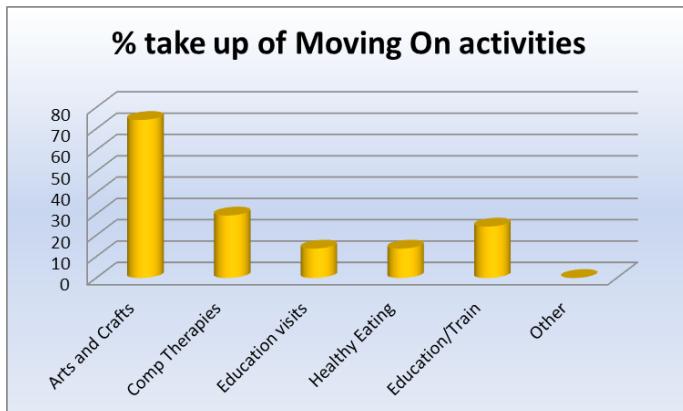
Participants in Skelmersdale tended to have been using Moving On for longer than those in Preston, a by-product of different referral routes, but participants at both centres were frequent users, with most attending between one and three times each week. Art and craft activities are the most popular by far, followed by complementary therapies, education and training, healthy eating and educational visits.

The vast majority of Moving On's participants find the programme's activities useful, with only small numbers feeling they were not so.



Likert scaled statements showed that participants were strongly agreed that Moving On had been successful against its core BLF outcomes of:

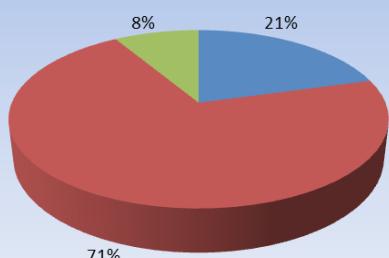
1. Helping people take part in group activity and learning and skills development, and through this to raise their self-esteem and reduce their social isolation.
2. Increasing people's access to education and through this to achieve an increase in the take up of new learning opportunities.
3. Addressing the problems associated with worklessness through increased skills levels, and through this increased prospects for employment.
4. Evidencing an increase in self-confidence in Moving On's participants.



There is just a suggestion that agreement levels for outcomes 1 and 4 were somewhat stronger than for outcomes 2 and 3. A fifth outcome, 'achieving volunteering work experience placements, and through this to strengthen communities', was measured through qualitative interviews with participants, and again, these interviews provide powerful evidence suggesting the project has been successful in this respect too.

The majority of the programme's participants do not know how much longer they will need Moving On, and although a substantial minority of participants felt additional resources and activities might be offered, there was no consensus about what these should be. However, in a separate question, nearly 71% of participants felt that Moving On Lancashire could not be improved at all.

Could anything about Moving On be improved?



CASE STUDY: Lucy (participant)

Lucy's apprehension about meeting new people has lessened through Moving On. "When you're there, you're with different people who have all got their problems and troubles, and you know they're not going to judge you, or ask questions you can't answer," she added.

Lucy is keen to find a route to employment ("I don't want to live in a vegetative black hole for the rest of my life," she said), and feels that Moving On Lancashire is helping her with that journey.

Life without Moving On would be too much for Lucy. "I'd be devastated," she exclaimed, "I would probably cope better now than I would have done, but I'd be horrified, it's really hard to put into words, but I can cope with things there that in the world I'm not exposed to, I don't expose myself to them because it's too frightening."

"I don't want to remember what my life was like before I started coming here."



Moving On Participants

First contact

Entry to the programme is by referral only, and participants were positive about the introductory process and preliminary interviews. Waiting times between first contact and preliminary interview were seen as satisfactory, although there is concern these might lengthen as the number of referrals rise.

One-to-one and group activity

Participants are offered one-to-one support until they are ready to join activity groups, and the transition from the one to the other is handled sensitively and at a sensible pace.

Moving On Lancashire's staff

Moving On's staff are valued by its participants, who appreciate their listening skills, their availability and their non-judgemental attitudes.



CASE STUDY: Brian (participant)

Brian's life fell to pieces around him after a relationship breakdown. Having qualified as an accountant, something that took him a lot of time and effort, he was unprepared for the traumas that were waiting. "I then became homeless," he remembers, "which was a real shock to me. My world crashed, I went to the Fox Street Night Shelter, which was where I lived for a while, and whilst I was there I received a lot of help from a lot of agencies, so I thought, 'Right, I want to change my life, I want to do support work.'"

In fact, during the course of our evaluation, Brian did successfully find work with a firm of accountants, something he feels would not have happened so quickly without Moving On. "Well, basically, great success story, I've got a job, I start next Monday," he said, "Moving On has certainly helped me to do that."



CASE STUDY: Wendy (participant)

After suffering from leukaemia twice and going through a bone marrow transplant, and after her father had developed a brain tumour, her father-in-law had developed prostate cancer and her mother had died, all over a twelve month period, Wendy and her family decided to start a new life in Cyprus.

Once there, her marriage broke down, leading Wendy into depression and an unsuccessful attempt to take her own life. "After the breakdown of our marriage, I tried to kill myself, and was taken into hospital in Cyprus," she remembered, "but they literally just give you antidepressants, stick you in a room and that's as far as you go."

Most of her co-patients were Greek, and she enjoyed little interaction with them, deciding instead to return to England. Staying with a friend in Skelmersdale, Wendy visited her local GP, who referred her for counselling. "I went to a counsellor here in Skelmersdale," she said, "and they gave me the name of here."

The richness and variety of Moving On's activities motivate Wendy to get up in the morning and do something constructive with her life. Without Moving On Wendy doubts she could have survived. "I'd have just gotten to a place that there was no other way out, and I probably wouldn't be here today," she said.

Things that could be added to Moving On

Participants identified Moving On as filling a clear gap in provision, and felt they would regress if the project closed. A small number of participants even felt suicide could be a risk without Moving On's support.



CASE STUDY: Phil (participant)

Phil's journey through depression, into Moving On and on to volunteering and fostering started when he was made redundant after 26 years working for the same company in Golborne, near Wigan. "Absolutely shell shocked, floored, totally floored," he said, "I was there for twenty six years, brought me in the office one day, just said, 'That's it, yourself as transport manager and the production manager are being made redundant.' Got made redundant, massive shock, absolutely distraught, came home that day sat down and just cried."

Phil found his introductory interview with one of Moving On's workers a revelation. "I felt as though I could tell her everything and she listened, I felt that she understood what I was talking about and what I was going through," he recalled.

There is certainly a perception that the availability of some of Moving On's activities has been restricted because of funding constraints. This was discussed primarily in terms of the arts and crafts programme. Participants did say they would like more activity directed at finding employment, such as CV writing courses and interview skills, although these did not emerge from the survey results.



CASE STUDY: Gary (participant)

Gary had suffered from poor mental health for years before discovering Moving On Lancashire. "I'd been through the mental health services with the NHS," he recalled, "it just didn't really help." "I'd been suicidal for ten years," he said, "ten years, seriously, I mean, there's reasons why I didn't do it, too much respect for my parents, luckily I lived next door to my parents."

Gary was introduced to Moving On after seeking advocacy support, and after an initial meeting discovered that his case worker had a similar background to his own. "He gave me a brief outline of his story, and there were a lot of similarities, he sort of kept me alive, basically, you know, it needed to be sorted out," he said.

After identifying his environment as a major factor in his illness, Moving On were able to put Gary in touch with a housing association that offered supported housing, and were able to secure him temporary accommodation in the Lake District, where he got a job as a volunteer on an organic farm for people recovering from mental health problems. Since then Gary has secured a permanent flat in Kendal, where in time he wants to establish a similar initiative to Moving On.

Participants' mental health

The people we interviewed reported a range of mental health issues, and felt that the awareness that everybody at Moving On had a problem of some form supported the rapid development of a strong and supportive sense of community.

Participants in Preston seemed more likely to have employment histories than those in Skelmersdale, and depression and isolation, low self-esteem and low self-confidence seemed to be linked. There was also a link apparent between depression and worklessness. Moving On directly improves its participants' self-confidence, and people spoke enthusiastically of the socialisation and group activities, and the way these better prepare them for improved independence, including volunteering and employment. In some cases this has already expressed itself through self-organised activities, including one social enterprise.



CASE STUDY: Richard (participant)

Richard was introduced to Moving On by Jobcentre Plus after depression forced him out of his job as a coach driver. "I'd been burned out at work basically, and I've had quite a lot of problems, I lost my parents in the 90s, and I lost a brother, and my wife's been very poorly, just one thing after another, everything's just got too much for me, all the problems that I've had," he said, "Since I've come here my confidence has improved."

In common with many participants, Moving On has enabled Richard to take up art, an interest he inherited from his father, who was a keen collector of antiques, including water colours and oil paintings. Richard has also started English grammar courses, and has managed to secure voluntary work in a local community centre. "I wash pots for about three or four hours, and I quite like it because it is just something to do, I know I'm just helping out in whatever way I can." Moving On has helped Richard find the confidence to start thinking about returning to work. "My confidence has been really low," he said, "so actually coming in here, it's given me a new lease of life."

Employment and employability

Employment and employability is a priority for participants, and although most feel their journey to it might be a long and demanding one, full or part-time paid employment remains the most common longer term aspiration, although few people can say how much longer they will need Moving On's support. Participants favour caring professions such as nursing and support work as employment destinations, and volunteering is seen as an important preparatory step on the journey to paid work.



CASE STUDY: Kathy (participant)

Kathy's Jobcentre Plus advisor referred her to Moving On after she started suffering from depression and isolation, rarely leaving her home. She rang Moving On on Kathy's behalf, encouraging her to make an appointment for an interview with them.

Even though she receives regular hospital treatment, and cannot stand comfortably for any length of time, Kathy is keen to use her new found confidence to look for work. "It's given me more courage, and more confidence, and more self-esteem," she said, speaking of Moving On.

Looking forward, Kathy, who has a City & Guilds beautician qualification, would see her journey through Moving On leading to employment. "I think once I've got my confidence more, and I've got myself sorted, I'll probably move on to different things," she said, "and hopefully look for a job where I can manage."

Education and training

Education and training opportunities are desirable for participants, many of whom prefer some form of accreditation, such as Ascentis. There is a suggestion that education and training courses as such might not have as great an impact on participants' employability as improved self-esteem and self-confidence.



CASE STUDY: Sarah (participant)

Sarah had suffered from mental health problems for most of her life until, when in crisis, Skelmersdale Community Mental Health Team at the Daniels Lane Centre put her in touch with Moving On Lancashire, where they felt she could find useful activities to pursue during the daytime.

Sarah came to Moving On with a psychiatric nurse at first, but soon started joining classes. "I did a couple of classes a week to start off," she said, "and at first I wasn't confident, I wouldn't say anything to anybody."

Sarah is in no doubt that Moving On is helping her achieve her ambitions. "They're pushing me, because I know I need a kick up the backside," she said, "but they don't do it in a bad way, they are like, 'You have to do this.'"

Moving On's partners

The nature of Moving On's partnership working

Moving On's partnerships tend to be informal and long standing, and their partners find the project accessible.

Why partners use Moving On

Partners refer clients to Moving On to counter social isolation, and feel the project is successful in terms of volunteering and employment outcomes.

Moving On's 'person-centred' approach is seen as unique and valuable, and one that does actually move people on.

Partners feel Moving On fills a void in non-statutory provision, particularly in Skelmersdale.

Although partners were not sure what the cost implications of Moving On ceasing to exist would be, they felt they could be considerable, particularly if they had to offer a similar service themselves.

Moving On's strengths

Moving On's holistic approach was identified by partners as one of its great strengths, as was its lack of time constraints and its commitment to understanding mental health issues.

Moving On's weaknesses

Partners also felt, however, that Moving On's funding base was a cause of uncertainty, and that the project needed to make sure it was paid properly for the commissions it received.

Partners would like to see greater clarity about what Moving On does, and how it relates to other agencies. One partner suggested they needed a clearer strategic vision that staff at every level could buy into.

Areas for future development

Some partners felt Moving On would be sensible to position itself within the broader health and wellbeing agenda, and others felt that introducing an outreach service would be beneficial, provided it did not encourage dependency.

Weekend provision would be useful to some partners, and one partner suggested Moving On might work with other agencies to target carers and families and young people.

Partners also felt that Moving On needs to develop better evidenced arguments for why its services represent value-for-money, particularly to support its applications to health service commissioners.

Moving On's staff

Moving On's own staff also identified the lack of time constraints as one of the project's critical success factors.

Multiple site working

Staff felt that the project had developed differently in Preston and Skelmersdale, but that it had become more discerning in terms of filtering out inappropriate referrals. Staff identified a tension between their person-centred approach, and increasing numbers of referrals and lengthening waiting lists. However, these factors were also seen as powerful evidence of need. Staff wondered whether an outreach service might alleviate some of these difficulties.

Critical success factors

A strong sense of team was also seen by staff as a critical success factor, and they would like to see team building feature more prominently in the future.

Communication between case workers and tutors is important, and staff would like to see a more structured approach to staff development, including reflective practice.



CASE STUDY: Graham, Skelmersdale Case Worker

Graham has been working for Moving On's Skelmersdale project as a case worker for nearly three years, and thinks the lack of time constraints on participants is one of its strongest features.

It can take time before people are ready to move from one-to-one support to group work, and the relationship between case workers and tutors is important if they are to get the transition right. "We're doing very, very small groups," he said, "again, this can be after quite a long series of one-to-ones to prepare people for the group. The tutor is very good and very intuitive about where people are, she will feed back to the staff.

"It's about that interaction between the staff and the tutors, and where we feel the person needs to develop."

Group work and teaching

Art and craft is recognised by staff as the most popular class being offered, but ICT is also seen as having a high impact for participants, particularly through the access to social media it can bring.

Impact of the recession

The recession is seen as impacting on Moving On, both in terms of its participants, who are increasingly people who have been made redundant, or young people disengaged by cuts to young people's services, and in terms of the availability of funding. Participants are increasingly suffering from economic hardship, and the project is introducing some budget management support to counter this.

Employability

Staff acknowledged that job-seeking skills such as CV writing and interview techniques are only available through the ICT classes, but are developing a Job Skills programme jointly with a housing association to address this need.



CASE STUDY: Jacqui, Tutor

Jacqui joined Moving On seven or eight years ago after being made redundant from her job as an art tutor at a local FE college. "I gradually built up clients, working with people with mental health issues and working with the Women's Refuge in Preston," she remembered, "and then eventually it got changed into Moving On."

"I work less hours now, because I'm only a part-timer, but I just love it, I absolutely love it, I love watching people who come in here with all the curses of the world on their shoulders, and they're never, ever going to get through it. Then they go out the other end, a properly formed person again."

Jacqui, who is self-employed and works in both Preston and Skelmersdale, feels the informal, unpressured atmosphere of the classes is important. "If they don't feel up to it they go and have a drink and something to eat, and then come back," she said, "Just to be here is getting them out of the house, it's giving them a purpose, coming out of that door, locking that door, walking down, coming here."

