

# LEGACY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE HELP THROUGH CRISIS PROGRAMME

Updated learning paper (revised February 2022)

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## About the Help through Crisis programme

Help through Crisis (HtC) is a £33 million National Lottery funded programme set up by The National Lottery Community Fund (The Fund), the largest funder of community activity in the UK. HtC supports 69 partnerships across England which help people who are experiencing or at risk of hardship crisis to overcome the difficulties they are facing to plan for their futures. The partnerships receiving National Lottery funding through the HtC programme bring together local small voluntary groups and established charities. Working together, they offer people advice, advocacy and support which matches their personal circumstances. The aim is to look at the issues people face, and the underlying causes, from their basic needs, to their physical and mental health, to skills and employment. People are supported to draw on their personal experiences to build on their skills and strengths so they are ready to seize the opportunities and challenges ahead.

## About the Learning, Support and Evaluation team

The HtC Learning, Support and Evaluation (LSE) team is a consortium of organisations commissioned by The National Lottery Community Fund to help build understanding and capture learning from the HtC programme. The team is made up of people from Ipsos MORI (Lead Contractor), Revolving Doors Agency and Hopkins Van Mil. The role of the consortium is to work with the 69 partnerships involved in the programme to:

- Empower them to evaluate and measure their impact, and capture learning about what works in tackling hardship crisis,
- Support their co-production activities, ensuring the people they support have a voice in shaping local services, and
- Identify good practice and disseminate learning to build the evidence base and help partnerships to replicate or scale up approaches from elsewhere.

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# INTRODUCTION

The five-year HtC programme ended in Summer 2021. Partnerships have been reflecting on what they have learned and achieved during HtC and considering what comes next for the crisis support work funded through their project. Many HtC partnerships, at the time they were interviewed by the LSE team for this output, were in the process of applying for further funding, and developing different ways to sustain the work delivered through HtC. Partnerships told us about the potential legacy of the programme for their organisations and the people they support.

This learning paper draws together findings from the Spring 2021 case studies the LSE team conducted with HtC partnerships, focusing on the themes of legacy and sustainability. The LSE team spoke to 53 people across 15 partnerships in case study interviews. The LSE team also conducted further interviews with five partnerships to discuss sustainability and legacy in more depth.

Following the end of the HtC programme, the LSE team conducted a further 8 follow-up interviews with people from partnerships whose funding had ended at least 3 months prior to interview in Autumn 2021. The aim of these interviews was to understand whether the HtC approach to crisis support had been maintained after HtC funding ended and the factors that enabled or hindered the sustainability of HtC projects and related activities.

**Section 1: Legacy of the Help through Crisis programme** – This section outlines what HtC partnerships said they had learned as a result of their involvement with the HtC programme. It also describes some of the aspects of HtC they would like to take forward in their future work. This section finishes with partnerships' reflections on the legacy the HtC programme may leave for the individuals, organisations and partners involved.

**Section 2: Sustainability of holistic crisis-support** – This section explores some of the ways HtC partnerships planned to continue delivering holistic crisis support. It includes examples of steps HtC partnerships had put in place to help maintain activities started or developed through HtC **continue**. There are also examples of how partnerships had secured further funding.

**Section 3: Revisiting the sustainability of holistic crisis support – findings from the post-HtC follow-up interviews:** This section includes additional findings from the interviews the LSE team conducted following the end of the HtC programme to explore the extent to which partnerships were able to sustain HtC-related activities.



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# THE LEGACY OF THE HELP THROUGH CRISIS PROGRAMME

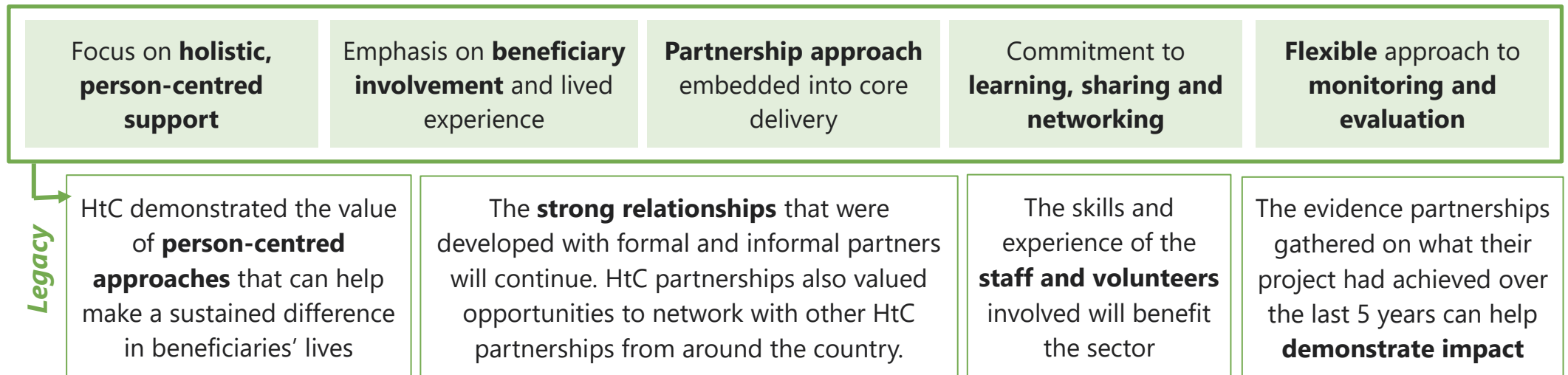
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# PARTNERSHIPS DESCRIBED THE KEY BENEFITS OF HTC THAT MAY FORM PART OF ITS LEGACY

Overall, partnerships were very positive about being part of the HtC programme, highlighting benefits to their organisations, the people they work with, and their wider local networks. Partnerships described several unique features of the HtC programme compared with previous funding, including multi-year funding and a flexible approach to evaluating outcomes. Partnerships said being part of the programme had shaped the way they work, as it provided them with the **flexibility, tools, and time** to develop more effective ways of delivering crisis support. As a result, many partnerships expressed a strong desire to continue with similar approaches to crisis support and were actively exploring ways to sustain this after the HtC programme ends (see Section 2).

The **multi-year funding** awarded through the programme and the **long-term, holistic approach** to crisis support were seen to underpin many of the benefits of HtC. Having five years of funding allowed partnerships to develop their delivery models and achieve more, including providing sustained support for many beneficiaries. Partnerships identified the following key features of the HtC programme as potentially forming a legacy after the funding ends:



Legacy



*"Having similar projects all over the UK would be fantastic."*

*Lead partner staff*



*"What I would say about HtC is that they [The Fund] have been very supportive and have helped us to learn... through the five years."*

*Lead partner staff*

# HTC DEMONSTRATED THE VALUE OF PERSON-CENTRED APPROACHES

Over the five years of the HtC programme, partnerships had supported many people experiencing crisis in their local areas. Partnerships described how, through HtC, they were able to **reach types of people often not reached by mainstream services**. Providing crisis support almost always involved meeting people's basic needs, but partnerships also sought to tackle the underlying causes of crisis. This often included addressing beneficiaries' physical and mental health needs.

Partnerships viewed the holistic, person-centred focus of HtC as integral to effectively supporting people to move through crisis and improve their lives. They described how working with beneficiaries over a long period of time enabled them to **build trust and support beneficiaries to use their strengths to overcome barriers in their lives**. This longer term approach also helped HtC partnerships involve beneficiaries in shaping the support they offer. Some partnerships had formally embedded co-production in their organisations (see the [Involving Beneficiaries: Learning from Help Through Crisis](#) learning paper).

As HtC partnerships reflected on the legacy of the programme, the difference support had made to beneficiaries was at the forefront of their thinking. HtC projects helped beneficiaries **build confidence, increase their knowledge of available services, and make meaningful changes** to their lives. While partnerships were not sure if changes in beneficiaries' lives would be sustained in the years to come, they were confident that many beneficiaries were now better equipped to manage their lives and meet future challenges.



*[The project worker] spoke to me as though I was a human being instead of somebody that was shunted from pillar to post .... I explained to her my situation and she was so supportive ... Because if it hadn't been for them then I wouldn't have gone on to the next step and the next step ... I'm actually getting there now."*

*Beneficiary*



*Beneficiaries have increased their knowledge and their self efficacy so that they can hopefully manage different things in the future when things come up. They either know how to deal with them [crises] or they know where to find somebody who can deal with them."*

*Lead partner staff*

## Case study: The Helping Hands project

Citizens Advice Telford and the Wrekin is the lead organisation for the Helping Hands project. Their partner organisation 'Stay' produced a video to share the story of Ben, a Helping Hands beneficiary. This video highlights the impact the project had on Ben and his mother Lesley. You can watch Ben's story here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azLYxMFends>



# STRONG PARTNERSHIPS ESTABLISHED THROUGH HTC PROVIDE FOUNDATIONS FOR FUTURE COLLABORATION

Partnership working was one of the core elements of the HtC programme. The benefits of this partnership approach were highlighted in previous LSE outputs on this theme (including our recent learning paper on [Effective partnership working during Help through Crisis and beyond](#)). Partnerships agreed that the relationships developed with formal and informal partners during HtC were likely to provide them with a **number of ongoing benefits** in the future.

## Formal partnerships

After five years of working in collaboration as a partnership to deliver crisis support, core HtC partners reported that they had built strong, established relationships and ways of working. For example, one reported that a local wider partner had described their HtC partnership as a good example of how to collaborate on crisis support. Many HtC partnerships reported that they intended to continue working together when the HtC programme ends by keeping referral routes open. Others were bidding together for further funding to sustain their services (as described in more detail in Section 2).

*“We have got a legacy of good partnership working, and particularly with [organisation], we are going to try and build on that, and find some funding.”*

*Lead partner staff*

## Wider partnerships

Over the course of the HtC programme, HtC partnerships also developed relationships with organisations outside their formal partnership. This often involved building partnerships with referral organisations in the local area and joining local crisis support networks (including with GPs, alcohol and drug rehabilitation services, and housing, benefit, and mental health teams in local authorities). Partnerships described how effective these relationships were, and how they were working to continue to maintain close links in the future.

*“HtC has helped strengthen our relationship with the local authority, their financial services, as well as [other teams] for ongoing referrals.”*

*Lead partner staff*

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# PARTNERSHIPS HAVE GAINED FROM NETWORKING AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH HTC

In addition to learning about effective crisis support as they delivered their HtC projects, partnerships highlighted the **benefits of being part of the wider HtC network**. They valued the opportunities this network had provided to access peer support and share knowledge. They found it helpful and inspiring to hear about similar crisis support work being conducted by other HtC partnerships across the country.

Many HtC partnerships engaged with the activities hosted by the HtC programme and LSE team, including workshops, events, webinars and evaluation activities. Partnerships described how being part of HtC had provided opportunities to:

- **Make connections** with people from other HtC partnerships;
- **Share learning and success stories** with other partnerships as well as The Fund;
- **Adapt their ways of working** with partners and beneficiaries based on what they heard at learning and sharing sessions;
- Learn about specific ways of working that were important to improving their effectiveness, such as **local influencing** and **co-production**.

Many partnerships were hopeful that the connections they had built with other members of the HtC network would continue after the funding ended.



*There's been a lot of national or regional events with Help through Crisis, where we've had opportunities to meet with other organisations around co-production or just of the whole of the Help through Crisis approach. We've taken bits and pieces of learning from that."*

*Lead partner staff*



*"The knowledge that we've gained [from running our HtC project, we've shared with other colleagues within [organisation], but we've also shared within the [HtC] network."*

*Lead partner staff*



*"We could take what we've learned from [HtC project]. We've learned so much and want to apply some of that and how we deliver that service to what we're doing in [local area]."*

*Lead partner staff*

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# THE SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS CAN BENEFIT HTC ORGANISATIONS AND THE SECTOR IN FUTURE

Passionate, effective and resilient staff and volunteers are central to the delivery of successful crisis support. The [Principles of Effective Service Delivery](#) output produced by the LSE team highlights how important it is for staff and volunteers, especially those involved in frontline activities, to have the right skills and be appropriately equipped and supported to do their work.

- Partnerships worked to develop staff and volunteer teams throughout HtC. They often described the **experience and capabilities of their teams as one of the main legacies** of HtC. Partnerships noted that the skills and knowledge gained through delivering their HtC project would help them and their colleagues deliver effective crisis support in future. This was identified as a key way that the HtC programme would continue to benefit the organisations involved, as well as the wider sector.
- An important part of supporting staff and volunteers is promoting their wellbeing. The LSE team's literature scan on '[Staff Wellbeing in Crisis Support](#)' highlights how wellbeing is crucial in the context of crisis support. Frontline workers are at a potentially high risk of developing burnout and experiencing vicarious trauma. HtC partnerships found that supporting their staff and volunteers with their mental health and wellbeing had become more important over the course of the HtC programme, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Partnerships described the **focus on the mental health of staff and volunteers as an important part of the legacy** of the HtC programme that they plan to continue to apply in their work.

*"I think personal learning for all of us really is always something that you can take and use in another role. That includes the people who have left the project."*

*Lead partner staff*

*"I think we've identified the need to support staff during [HtC]. I hope that [organisation] is going to take forward a bit more staff care."*

*Lead partner staff*

*"I think [HtC] has just allowed us to be more professional... just in terms of the staff training opportunities and that kind of thing, it really it has moved us on."*

*Lead partner staff*

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# HTC HAS PROVIDED PARTNERSHIPS WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO GATHER BETTER EVIDENCE ABOUT THEIR WORK

HtC partnerships were required to directly commission local evaluators as a condition of their grant. This meant partnerships had **flexibility to shape the evaluation based on the needs of their HtC project**. Partnerships viewed this flexibility around monitoring and evaluation as a strength of the HtC programme.

In particular, the flexibility around evaluation meant that that HtC partnerships were not required to gather findings relating to specific outcomes by The Fund. Instead, they were able to design evaluations 'bottom-up' to gather findings that could best support their project and organisation.

Partnerships used the findings gathered over the past five years to support their activities. For example, HtC partnerships used evaluation findings to:

- **Support further bids for funding** (discussed further in Section 2);
- **Support efforts to engage and influence** organisations in the local area. For example, Community Links Trust used case studies in presentations to Children's Services teams in their local authority;
- **Improve the services they deliver** through, for example, identifying training needs for staff or adapting ways of delivering support based on beneficiary feedback;
- **Share the success of their work** with other organisations, including those in their wider local networks and other HtC partnerships.



*"We've got quite a lot of information about the difference [our project] made and quantitative and qualitative feedback and case studies and stuff like that. We've used those for funding applications."*

*Lead partner staff*



*Having the support and the luxury of being able to do this work has allowed us to gather some really good quality data."*

*Lead partner staff*

More detail on how HtC partnerships embedded evaluation in their organisations can be found in the learning paper '[Embedding evaluation across teams: Why it matters](#)'

# 2

## SUSTAINING A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO CRISIS SUPPORT

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# HTC PARTNERSHIPS ARE SEEKING TO SUSTAIN THEIR CRISIS

## SUPPORT ACTIVITIES IN FOUR MAIN WAYS

As the HtC programme drew to a close in Summer 2021, partnerships were considering how they could continue to deliver the holistic support provided through their HtC project. Securing **additional funding** was top of mind for most HtC partnerships. Many were also looking at other ways to sustain activities. Approaches being considered included:

**Securing further grant funding for crisis support** – All HtC partnerships involved in the 2021 case studies were pursuing (or had already found) alternative funding to enable them to continue at least some project activities.

**Developing alternative sources of income** – Some HtC partnerships were working towards financing their crisis support activities in a way that replaces or supplements grant funding. This included fundraising activities and ways to monetise some services to help continue project activities and retain staff (e.g. being paid to provide some services, or collecting rent for housing).

**Making the most of local networks** – Many HtC partnerships were using the relationships and networks developed through the HtC programme to find ways to sustain crisis support (for example, partnering to seek further funding).

**Working with volunteers and peer involvement** – Some HtC partnerships embedded volunteers and peer support activities in the core delivery of their project. This provided a way to continue support activities with less funding.

There were a number of common challenges partnerships faced when applying for further funding, many of which were not unique to organisations involved with HtC.

For example, there were challenges around identifying funding for services that provide specialist support to a small number of people. In addition, partnerships said there was strong competition for some funding. They described specific conditions placed on grant funding acting as a barrier (e.g. based on the level of organisational income).

More specifically to HtC, partnerships reported that there are few funders that recognise the value of long-term crisis support in a similar way to the HtC programme.

However, despite these challenges, some HtC partnerships were able to secure further funding. Examples of how they did this can be found on the following slide.

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# PARTNERSHIPS ARE USING LEARNING AND EVIDENCE FROM HTC TO APPLY FOR FURTHER GRANT FUNDING

## Securing further grant funding for crisis support

Some HtC partnerships were able to secure further funding to continue employing project staff in similar roles, or to carry on delivering different aspects of holistic crisis support. Other partnerships were in discussions about potential funding opportunities. Partnerships described using the learning and evidence from the HtC programme in two key ways:

- **Bidding for further funding jointly with HtC partners.** HtC partners applying for funding together said they were able to demonstrate a 'tried and tested' approach to crisis support, with existing referral mechanisms and established ways of working. This was seen as important because funders often prefer or require joint bids highlighting the role of different partners.
- **Strengthening funding applications by demonstrating what they had achieved through their HtC project.** This included using evidence from evaluation activities to support grant applications, as well as having more informal discussions around funding opportunities (e.g. with their local authority). Some HtC partnerships were also using evidence, including case studies of impact on individual beneficiaries, to raise their project's profile in a proactive way in the local area to help attract grant funding.

### Case study: Birmingham Mind

Birmingham Mind provide wrap-around support to people recently discharged from hospital. They have secured an additional years' funding for their project directly from one of the hospitals they partnered with during their HtC project. Their evaluation gathered evidence on the impact the project has had on hospital bed numbers and the value of their peer mentor activities. This meant they were able to make a case to the hospital to support their project directly.



*They [the hospital] are able to see the impact of the project overall ... We had three specific wards that we were working on so they could track comparison to the [other] wards to see what difference being able to discharge people quicker made to the bed state."*

Lead partner staff

# HTC PARTNERSHIPS WERE SEEKING ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF INCOME, INCLUDING FUNDRAISING

## Developing alternative sources of income

As well as pursuing grant funding for continuing crisis support, HtC partnerships explored other ways to generate income:

- For some partnerships, this was about focusing on **fundraising efforts** – these partnerships highlighted that public awareness of the importance of crisis support, notably foodbanks, had increased over recent years. This, coupled with the Covid-19 pandemic, had resulted in some partnerships seeing an increase in donations and support from the public and the private sector for these types of services.
- Others were considering what **alternative sources of income** and long term strategies were available to help them operate more sustainably. For example one partnership, WomenCentre, was in the process of developing a housing project to provide more financial security for the organisation (see case study below).



*We've found that the food bank and the stuff around poverty is quite easy to engage the public to support. We've had quite successful fundraising and corporate support. I think our country now has moved on quite a lot in the last five years even, now understands what food banks are, and the need for supporting people in poverty ... generally, the ability to engage people in supporting that is far easier than it is for [other services]."*

Lead partner staff

## Case study: WomenCentre

WomenCentre offers a wide range of services to support women in Calderdale and Kirklees, West Yorkshire. To help ensure the organisation is more resilient in future and has a reliable source of income, it developed a housing project called 'WomenCentre Homes'. Other Women's organisations have used a similar model. The model involves directly providing an affordable housing option for women who are in receipt of Housing benefit. WomenCentre highlighted that this is a long term strategy that takes time and resources to set up. However, once it is established at scale, it can provide additional funding and a sustainable source of income for the organisation.



# HAVING STRONG LOCAL NETWORKS HAS HELPED HTC PARTNERSHIPS IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABILITY

## Making the most of local networks

Partnerships described the wider local networks established during HtC as one of the key legacies of the programme for their organisations. These networks provided opportunities to develop and sustain holistic crisis support. For example, strong local networks can help organisations keep updated on sources of funding that may be relevant to their project (e.g. sharing these by word of mouth). Some partnerships also used learning from the HtC programme to improve how they work with other organisations in future. For example, Citizens Advice Telford and the Wrekin and their partner organisation Stay plan to co-locate staff with other organisations to promote better sharing of information.

### Case study: Re:store Northampton

Re:store Northampton offers crisis support to vulnerable people in Northampton, with a focus on food provision and supporting financial hardship. As part of the HtC project, Re:store Northampton and their core HtC partners established the West Northants Food Aid Alliance. This alliance involves over 30 different partners working in food aid locally. As part of their strategy for the end of their HtC funding, the partnership were looking at a 'food club model' through the Food Aid Alliance. This would involve sustaining activities through a combination of fundraising and mutual sharing of resources (and potentially funding) with wider partner organisations.

### Case study: FISCUS Sunderland

FISCUS Sunderland offers welfare and benefits advice and crisis support through appointments and drop-in sessions. During the pandemic, as other services moved online, their caseworker worked more closely with the city-wide Sunderland Foodbank. The foodbank had secured short term funding to continue to provide holistic support through FISCUS to those facing crisis. FISCUS is also working with Sunderland Bangladesh International Centre and New Horizons – together supporting approximately 125 asylum seekers and refugees, including setting up a new targeted foodbank. The experience gained by the frontline team from delivering their HtC project will continue to be used to support people accessing foodbanks, as well as asylum seekers and refugees across Sunderland.

*“Because we’re now part of a bigger network, we can share resources and funding and those sorts of things.”*

Lead partner staff

# SOME ACTIVITIES CAN BE SUSTAINED IN THE SHORT TERM THROUGH VOLUNTEERS AND PEER SUPPORT

## Working with volunteers and peer support groups

- **Volunteers** are one way that partnerships may be able to continue offering some activities and support when funding is limited. Some HtC partnerships were making plans for volunteers to cover paid staff roles if these were no longer funded positions once the HtC programme ended. This included working with existing volunteers and examples of actively recruiting new volunteers.
- **Peer involvement** is another related way HtC partnerships plan to sustain activities with reduced funding. They described current or former beneficiaries volunteering to help to run services and offer support for new beneficiaries. These peer-led activities can often be run with staff playing a supervising role.

### Volunteers are not usually a long term solution

Partnerships said that using volunteers in place of trained, paid staff was not usually a permanent solution. This approach relies on the goodwill of volunteers and often requires paid staff to manage or supervise volunteer or peer-led work in order to be effective. Volunteers may also, eventually, want to pursue a paid position.

This approach can, however, ensure that activities are able to continue until a more permanent solution is found. It also highlights the importance of providing sufficient training and support for volunteers as part of project delivery so they have the skills to continue to support activities.

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*We've recruited some volunteers, we're relying heavily on that to sustain the project. A main focus at the moment is doing a good volunteer recruitment drive to really sustain it.*

Lead partner staff



*One member of staff had left already and that gap has been filled by a couple of volunteers ... and also one of our admin workers is doing a bit extra for us as well.*

Lead partner staff



# 3

## REVISITING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF HOLISTIC CRISIS SUPPORT

Findings from the post-HtC follow up interviews

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# MOST PARTNERSHIPS HAD SUSTAINED HTC-RELATED ACTIVITIES, ALTHOUGH THE SCALE OF ACTIVITIES DEPENDED ON FUNDING

## Sustaining crisis support activities and person-centred support after HtC

### Person-centred approach remains central to service delivery

Those interviewed described **person-centred support as something that would remain core to their activities going forward**. However, they felt it would need to be scaled down in the absence of further funding.

*I think we've always delivered that person-centred holistic approach ... So, we're still able to offer the same services but not at the same pace. So, we're not able to respond as quickly as we were.*

Lead partner staff

**Most partnerships interviewed post-HtC had secured further funding.** This had enabled them to continue delivering the support they had previously been offering through HtC. Partnerships said that **improvements and changes in ways of working** they had made during HtC had helped them secure further funding. For example, they were able to **demonstrate an effective partnership approach** (which was established during the HtC programme) to future funders.

Those who **hadn't managed to secure further funding** at the time of interview had taken steps to try and continue delivering support. These steps included **volunteers working in place of paid staff** and **supporting fewer beneficiaries**. However, these partnerships were planning on scaling activities back further in the absence of further funding.

Some partnerships (including both those who had secured further funding and those who had not at the point of interview) mentioned **not being able to maintain the same depth of engagement and support** as had been offered during HtC. Some made changes to their delivery models to help sustain their services.

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# RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARTNERS, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS HAD BEEN LARGELY SUSTAINED

## Sustaining relationships with partners

Most partnerships had maintained **good relationships with their core HtC partners**, although the extent to which they were working as closely with them as they had done during HtC varied.

Partnerships also highlighted **that relationships with other local organisations**, which were developed and strengthened during HtC, had been maintained. This continued to enable partnerships to reach different communities and signpost people more effectively to different services.

- Some partnerships reported **sharing good practice and case studies from HtC** with wider networks and partnerships they are part of (for example, health and wellbeing partnerships).
- Partnerships wanted to continue to apply the learning gathered during HtC around the **value of partnership working and effective ways of collaborating**.

## Sustaining relationships with staff and volunteers

Some partnerships had **retained their HtC staff**, although in some cases they had changed roles within the organisation after the funding ended. The key factors that enabled partnerships to retain their staff were **planning well ahead** of the end of the HtC programme and **securing further funding**. On the other hand, for some partnerships the end of HtC funding led to staff redundancies, which resulted in **resourcing challenges** and remaining staff feeling stretched.

Partnerships also reported that **relationships with volunteers tended to be less affected** by the end of HtC funding. One partnership, for example, mentioned that their volunteers were not generally made aware of the organisation's funding sources.



*Those relationships [with former HtC partners] have continued now even though the [HtC] project has finished. So, that was really good. And we still have the same amount of contact, I'd say, with most of them.*

Lead partner staff

# PARTNERSHIPS MAINTAINED A STRONG FOCUS ON INVOLVING BENEFICIARIES AND HAD MADE USE OF LEARNING FROM HTC

## Sustaining beneficiary involvement

Most partnerships wanted to continue amplifying beneficiary voices and involving beneficiaries after the end of HtC. Partnerships were **making use of learning from HtC** to do this. For example, one partnership had found that getting beneficiaries involved too early on in their support journey was not effective. This meant post-HtC, they had **started leading beneficiary involvement activities more informally** and at a point when beneficiaries felt ready to be involved.

Many partnerships said that the learning gathered during HtC around co-production and beneficiary voice was particularly helpful and valuable to them. Several mentioned that HtC was the first programme they were involved in that required them to carry out this element of work. This was viewed as beneficial in terms of being able to demonstrate experience of involving beneficiaries in services. They mentioned how this is now often a **requirement of funding applications**.



*The way we work with beneficiaries I think, in terms of getting them involved, was one of our learning points. We were going a bit too high level, trying to get them involved too early when our beneficiaries weren't at that place where they're able to get involved. So, one thing we learned was that we'd do that differently going forward and they'd adapt that to a more informal sort of co-production.*

Lead partner staff

# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE – LSE REFLECTIONS

Over the course of the programme, the LSE team have spoken to most HtC partnerships, their wider partners, and people who have been supported through crisis. The LSE team would highlight the following key points in terms of legacy and sustainability:

## **HtC has demonstrated the value of both long-term funding and holistic, person-centred approaches**

Learning from HtC partnerships and beneficiaries has repeatedly emphasised the value of long-term funding. This enabled partnerships to offer sustained, consistent support to those experiencing crisis, and involve beneficiaries in shaping the support they receive. HtC partnerships also described benefits of offering holistic, person-centred crisis support, as this model allowed them to not only meet people's immediate needs but also to tackle the root causes of their crisis. HtC partnerships have used their experience to demonstrate the value of these approaches to funders and the wider sector through grant bids and influencing activities.

## **Partnership working has encouraged strong relationships that can continue to bring benefits**

Partnership working has consistently been raised by partnerships as fundamental to the success of the HtC approach. Partnerships have given numerous examples of how these partner relationships are already being used to sustain services or keep referral routes open beyond HtC. There has been value in bringing together the diverse range of organisations who deliver HtC projects around England to network and learn from each other. This has enabled partnerships to build connections with other crisis support services and adapt ways of working based on success stories and knowledge shared through HtC learning and networking events. These relationships are a 'resource' partnerships can tap into in future to continue exchanging information and knowledge.

## **Learning about how to provide online support effectively can shape future delivery**

At the time of writing (June 2021) the Covid-19 pandemic is ongoing and, while restrictions are lifting, there is still uncertainty about the future. HtC partnerships have adapted at pace to provide effective support digitally and many have made significant efforts towards reaching the digitally excluded. As a blended approach (of face-to-face and remote support) may be required for some time yet, the processes established by partnerships will help ensure support continues to be delivered effectively in the face of uncertainty.

## **The skills and experience of staff and volunteers involved with HtC can benefit the wider sector**

The skills, experience and passion of staff and volunteers delivering HtC has been integral to its success and has been evident every time the LSE team speak with partnerships. The skills and knowledge that staff and volunteers further consolidated during HtC has helped them feel better equipped to tackle their beneficiaries' crises in the future. In addition, the learning staff gained from HtC can be applied in other roles, thus benefitting the wider sector.

## A FEW WORDS FROM THE LSE TEAM ...

The LSE team has very much enjoyed undertaking activities with HtC partnerships, and highly valued the openness and trust with which partnerships shared their experiences of delivering HtC projects with us. We would like to thank all HtC partnerships who gave their time to help us gather, understand and share learning from the HtC programme!

We hope the support that our team has provided over the course of the programme has been helpful to partnerships when delivering their projects and will continue to be useful in the future. The [HtC document library](#), which includes all of the resources produced, will remain available for partnerships to access.

We always welcome and value your feedback – let us know if you would like to share any thoughts, reflections, or your experiences of the Help through Crisis programme by emailing [HelpThroughCrisis@Ipsos-MORI.com](mailto:HelpThroughCrisis@Ipsos-MORI.com)



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## FURTHER RESOURCES

**A variety of additional resources, including those mentioned in this learning paper, are available to HtC partnerships on the [HtC Google Drive](#) and the [HtC document library](#):**

- The [Involving Beneficiaries: Learnings from Help through Crisis](#) learning paper focuses on ways HtC partnerships involved beneficiaries during the programme.
- The [Effective partnership working during Help through Crisis and beyond](#) learning paper summarises what has been learnt over the course of the HtC programme about effective partnership working.
- The [Principles of Effective Service Delivery](#) summary output presents principles for effective service delivery in the crisis support sector based on learnings from the HtC programme.
- The '[Embedding evaluation across teams: Why it matters](#)' details how HtC partnerships have embedded evaluation in their organisations.

**Some further resources on sustainability in the charity sector that may be useful to HtC partnerships includes:**

- [A step-by-step guide to generating evidence](#) (The National Lottery Community Fund): A step-by-step guide on generating and using evidence effectively, including tips on how to use the evidence gathered from your project and communicate it clearly.
- The [official government Coronavirus Guidance for the Charity Sector](#) includes detailed information on charity meetings, financial support, insolvency avoidance and managing finances during difficult times.
- [How to support the sustainability of funded projects](#) (NCVO KnowHow): This 'how-to' guide looks at the different components of achieving sustainability and creating a lasting impact on your area.
- [My Community, Funding](#) This is a resource hub designed to help organisations find funding to run services, cover core costs, train staff and volunteers and become a sustainable organisation.

**Some further resources on using evidence and evaluation findings for funding bids and applications that may be useful to HtC partnerships includes:**

- [Impact and evaluation](#) (NCVO): Webpage containing a wealth of resources on how to plan, measure and use evaluation findings to enhance impact.
- [How to use evaluation findings to improve your work](#) (NCVO): This page provides advice on using evaluation to improve activities.
- [How to share evaluation findings with funders and donors](#) (NCVO): This page contains seven tips on how to share evaluation findings with funders and donors.

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If you have any comments or questions about any of the issues discussed in this paper, please get in touch with the Learning, Support and Evaluation team using the email address below, or via the Slack platform.



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