

HELP THROUGH CRISIS LEARNING, EVALUATION & SUPPORT TEAM

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

September 2019

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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 small voluntary groups and established charities to work together locally. 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.

The HtC learning, evaluation and support (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), NEF Consulting, Revolving Doors Agency and Hopkins Van Mil. The role of the consortium is to help the 69 partnerships involved in the programme:

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

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CELEBRATING HELP THROUGH CRISIS

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Welcome to our 2018-19 end of year report!

The Help through Crisis (HtC) learning, evaluation and support (LSE) team is a group of organisations commissioned by The National Lottery Community Fund (The Fund) to help build understanding and capture learning from the HtC programme.

This report describes what we've done together since August 2018, and what we're planning to do with you next year.

The report is based on your feedback from events, conversations with partnerships and the partnership survey – thanks to everyone who completed this in June 2019. Throughout the autumn and winter of 2018-2019, 19 partnerships were also visited by a member of the LSE team and this report draws on findings from these case studies. You can see our annual report from last year on the [HtC Google Drive](#).

We're looking forward to seeing you in London on 26th September at the national event! But we'd love to hear from you before then if you have any thoughts or comments on our work so far, or about our plans for next year. You can get in touch at:

HelpThroughCrisis@ipsos.com

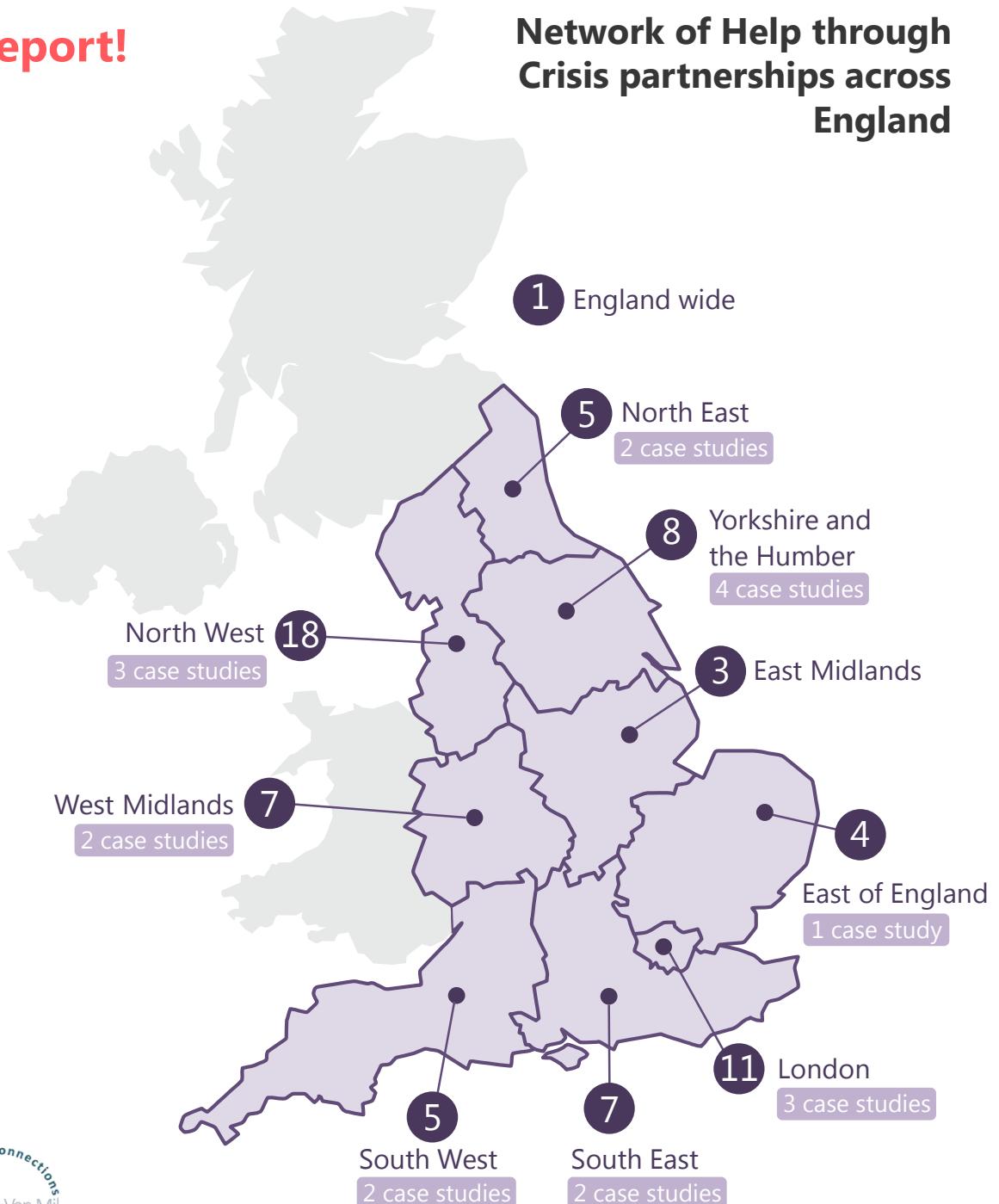


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Network of Help through Crisis partnerships across England



A list of partnerships in each region is provided in appendix A

THIS YEAR, TOGETHER:

85 people attended the **national event** in September 2018

77 people attended **co-production workshops** in January/February 2019

51 people attended **Spring regional events** in May/June 2019

19 **partnership case studies** were completed between November 2018 and April 2019

You said the events this year...

- Helped to facilitate connections between organisations.
- Provided a space for organisations to share and learn from each other, generating new ideas.
- Helped you to think about co-production and develop approaches within your organisation (see page 12 for more).
- Helped you spark discussions around staff wellbeing within your organisations (see page 11 for more).



Help through Crisis National Learning and Sharing Event 2018



We had the space to be able to talk freely on what works and doesn't work in each of our projects."

Partnership Feedback Survey



It was an excellent exchange of ideas."

Partnership Feedback Survey

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WE'VE CONTINUED TO BUILD A LIBRARY OF RESOURCES

You can find all of these documents (and many more) on the [HtC Google Drive!](#)



[About Help through Crisis](#)



[Co-production toolkit](#)



[Managing a HtC project](#)



[Evaluation toolkit](#)



[Supporting people](#)



[Learning and influencing](#)

National event report 2018



Partnership mapping tool & summary

Guide to developing peer support groups

Co-producing governance & designing services

Co-production webinar

Partnership working learning paper



Survey design note

Theory of Change workshop

Guide to embedding evaluation

Emerging findings webinar



Emerging Findings learning paper & activity booklet

Reaching out – insights on outreach and referrals

Staff support policy commentary

Messages and tactics for influencing toolkit

YOU TOLD US THE SUPPORT HAS BEEN USEFUL

When we asked "**How useful, if at all, have the following learning, evaluation and support activities been to your organisation over the last year?**" you told us... (2018 comparison)

Regional workshops

E.g. co-production workshops and regional workshops on staff wellbeing



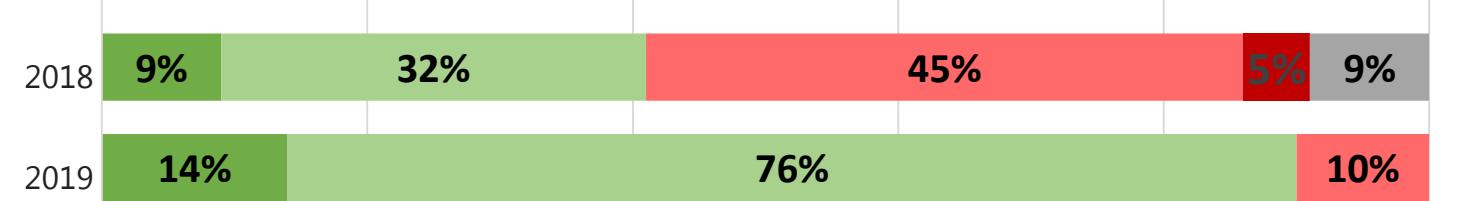
Written materials

E.g. the Emerging Findings learning paper, the Partnership Working paper, and the Survey Design note



Online resources

E.g. reading Help through Crisis newsletters, participating in discussions on Slack, participating in a webinar, using the resources on Google Drive



Very useful Fairly useful Not very useful Not useful at all Don't know

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Source: Partnership feedback survey 2019. Base: all (regional workshops – 43 (combination); written materials – 25; online resources – 21). 2018 source: partnership feedback survey 2018. Base: all (regional events – 34; written materials – 24; Slack – 22).

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TOGETHER, WE'VE LEARNED ABOUT...

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DIFFERENT WAYS OF PROVIDING EFFECTIVE CRISIS SUPPORT

Partnerships use different models to deliver support, but **holistic, person centred approaches are a crucial part of HtC projects**. This can be done in different ways, but often relies on an advice or case worker to provide an ongoing contact point for people. Developing this kind of relationship can help to build trust and allow support to be tailored to an individual and their circumstances. In this way, there is no one single approach to effective crisis support. Whichever model is used, creating a welcoming environment and involving volunteers are effective, practical ways to improve support and make people feel at ease.

Collaborating with volunteers

Throughout the year, partnerships have shared the ways they are involving volunteers in their project. Examples include:

- *"We use volunteers to process hardship grants and logistic of items to get delivered (white goods etc). It is an end to end position and it is very rewarding for the volunteer."*
- *"We have a volunteer who helps to facilitate a weekly drop-in, encouraging discussion around topics - it helps that he is a trained counsellor."*
- *"We have volunteers who have all been HtC customers and they have started their own Peer support group."*
- *"I have a team of Volunteers in our Newham Office. They carry out initial assessments and casework for their own clients as part of their training which I oversee."*

[Quotes from the [emerging findings webinar](#).]

Volunteers can also be a friendly face to welcome people when they first arrive at a service, offer practical support at drop-in sessions, or interpret for people where English is not their first language.

Creating a welcoming environment

Many partnerships work hard to create a welcoming atmosphere by:

- Offering personal, informal, honest communication
- Creating a friendly, positive environment
- Making services accessible
- Taking immediate action where they can
- Having a diverse staff team which can help people feel more comfortable

There is an exercise in the [emerging findings activity booklet](#) that can help to think about the initial impressions given by a service.



I liked the section in the emerging findings [booklet] where it talked about your office location and how welcoming it was. This made me think before a session with service users on the early design ideas of our peer support group we are setting up. It prompted me to ask where should this (potentially) be located, the overwhelming feeling was that it should be in the community, in an area of high deprivation which gave us the initial plan to operate this in [area]."

Partnership Feedback Survey



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The [Emerging Findings learning paper](#) explores these themes further.

THE IMPORTANCE OF REFERRALS AND REACHING OUT TO PEOPLE

Reaching out to people beyond those already engaged in a project is an important step for providing effective support to those with needs the service was designed for. Although each partnership needs to think about what this means in their own context, it's likely to involve:

1

Building Understanding

- Thinking about who is "easy to ignore" in your area and identifying ways of reaching them, including working to remove barriers that prevent them accessing support.

2

Increasing Visibility

- Equipped with this knowledge, steps can be taken to build a reputation with people who might need your service – whether now or in the future.
- Increasing the visibility of your project means that people know where to go to get support, at an earlier point in a crisis.

3

Working with others

- Collaborating with other organisations and volunteers can help to provide access to places that a project may not otherwise be able to reach.
- Setting clear, concise and consistent referral criteria and building strong relationships with referral organisations can also help to make this process effective.

Working with other is explored further in the [partnership working paper](#).

Reaching people through

Word of mouth

Local stakeholders & partners

Places of worship

Schools

GP surgery

Foodbanks

Posters & flyers

Researching the local area

Speaking to service users

Job fairs



In magazines, on books, the side of a bus maybe, because you never see anything about mental health on the side of a bus or TV. Maybe they could hand leaflets out. In the market, like on stalls, where you can find leaflets."

Beneficiary



[Research a local area]...It's targeted, it's intentional, it's designed like that. We're not spreading ourselves to everybody because we know we can't handle the numbers."

Newcastle Law Centre

The [Reaching Out Learning Paper](#) explores these approaches in more depth.

THE LINK BETWEEN STAFF WELLBEING AND EFFECTIVE SUPPORT

Supporting the health and wellbeing of frontline staff is a common challenge faced by HtC partnerships and other crisis support organisations. Organisations need to equip and support staff to promote their wellbeing and ensure they do not face excessive stress or burnout. Prioritising a supportive organisational culture does more than just improve staff wellbeing. It also leads to higher quality and more effective support for people facing crisis.

Senior leaders and managers play a crucial role in promoting staff wellbeing. This includes establishing a clear vision and commitment to promoting staff wellbeing, and reflecting this in organisational culture, communication, policies and practices. This can include: good line management, clinical supervision, supporting staff to set clear boundaries and building in time to reflect on work, for example using the Gibb's Reflective Cycle Model below. Making sure responsibility is shared across teams is also key.

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle Model



Sharing responsibility across teams

No one should feel solely responsible for the people they work with. Steps to support this can include:

- Debriefing at line management meetings
- Creating the space to share experiences with a team at internal meetings
- Providing more structured clinical supervision
- Formal handover processes
- Setting clear boundaries with beneficiaries



If you don't look after staff you are creating long-term problems including losing team members and overall strain."

London, staff wellbeing regional workshop participant

The upcoming Staff Support learning paper (September 2019) and the [Emerging Findings learning paper](#) explore these themes further.

HOW TO EMBED CO-PRODUCTION PRINCIPLES

How to set up groups:

1. Start with an informal gathering
2. Have prepared the workshop agenda
3. Identify 'quick wins' or priorities
4. Identify what group members want from their participation
5. Agree a time limit for membership
6. Continually evaluate the membership and attendance
7. Develop a way of measuring impact
8. Build social interaction into all meetings
9. Offer backing (from senior management)



“Revolving doors have helped us think around blockages to service user involvement and has enabled us to become more beneficiary led.”

Partnership feedback survey

The [Learning from the 2019 Co-production Sessions](#) explores these approaches in more depth.

How to apply co-production principles to a HtC project

Ladder of Engagement, discussed in the co-production toolkit:

Start with co-production

Develop a pilot. Back the staff that 'get it'.

Share learning

Inspire others, promote impact, spread the approach. Get senior management on board.

Embedding

Services are co-designed and co-delivered as standard practice.

Taking co-production to the next level

Andy can support you with developing co-production within your organisation. This year, he has helped partnerships:

Deliver peer support

Make beneficiary groups representative

Develop training programmes for beneficiaries

Embed co-production with young people

Draft co-production strategies

Set up groups

For example, Citizens Advice Oxford has worked closely with Andy, the LSE team co-production lead, to develop their co-production activities and set up an influencers group. They also helped to deliver the co-production workshops, describing their experiences of setting up the group and the challenges, achievements and learning they've found along the way. The slides from these workshops can be found [here](#) along with other co-production case studies. Let us know if you'd like to get involved!

You can contact Andy by email: andy.williams@revolving-doors.org.uk

THE IMPORTANCE OF EVALUATION

The value of embedding evaluation

It is particularly useful to have buy in among the staff and volunteers who are directly involved in delivering services. These individuals will likely need to be involved in the evaluation process, whether it is through co-ordinating client engagement processes or collecting impact measurement data (e.g. via client questionnaires).

Evaluation activities allow projects to both prove the value of the support they provide and to improve their ultimate impact. This should be emphasised when communicating the importance of evaluation to project staff and volunteers.

See more in the [embedding evaluation paper](#).



If you can show people the benefit to evaluation, if you show them that a client said that about the work that you did. Then on basic human level, there are not many people who are not going to buy into that. As long as you can show people the fruits of the evaluation, there's not a lot not to like, and they'll want to engage and try to get more of that."

Salford Citizens Advice

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Designing survey questions

Many evaluation approaches will include gathering feedback through surveys. We've included some tips on designing questions from the [survey design note](#).

1. Deciding if a survey is the tool you need
2. Reviewing existing survey tools
3. Considering individuals' privacy
4. Keeping the survey short
5. Keeping the questions clear and easy to answer
6. Thinking about the 'other' of options within a question
7. Asking about gender identity in an appropriate way
8. Thinking about the order of questions
9. Avoiding agreeing/disagreeing questions
10. Including "don't know" or "prefer not to say" options
11. Testing out the questions

Join the conversation on Slack

The **#evaluation** page within [Help through Crisis Slack](#) allows partnerships to continue these conversations.

On the channel, people have been discussing effective external evaluators and sharing evaluation reports. The LSE team will also help you with any evaluation-based questions you may have – so have a look at the channel and get in touch.



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PLANS FOR NEXT YEAR

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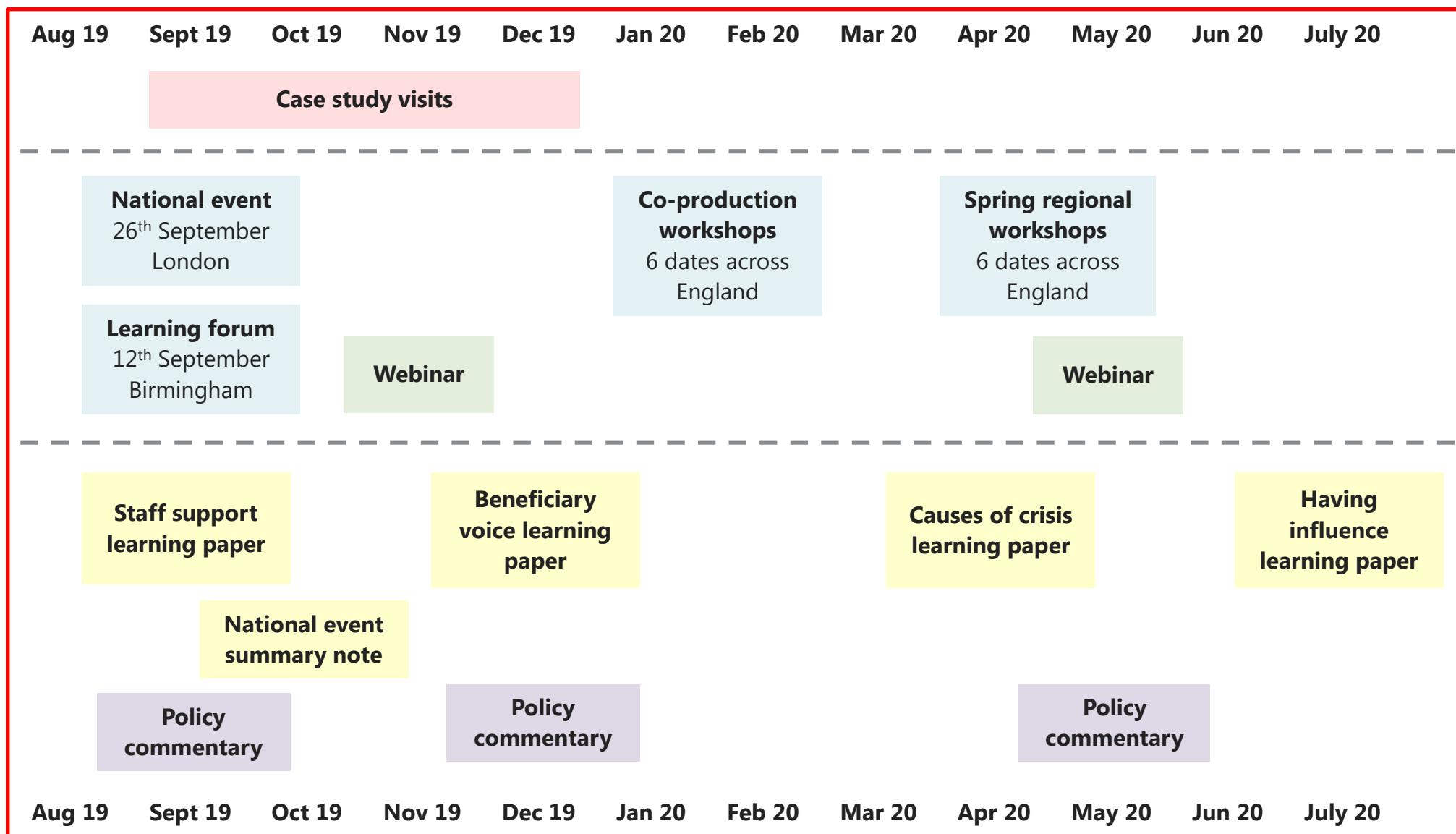
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WHAT WE'VE GOT PLANNED:

The calendar below summarises our plans for visits, events and written resources over the next year. You'll see we've made some suggestions for the areas we'd like to focus on, but let us know if you have other ideas for discussions or resources you'd like to have for your Help through Crisis project by emailing: HelpThroughCrisis@ipsos.com



WE WANT TO CONTINUE TO COLLABORATE WITH YOU

As you can see, we've got lots planned for the next year of the programme and we're keen to work with you to make it a success. Below are some of the ways **you can get involved**. Let us know if you have any other ideas on how we could work together!

Embedding lived experience in our work

Next year, we would like to do more with the people you work with as part of your HtC project. We are:

- Setting up a lived experience learning forum. The first event is being held on **12th September in Birmingham** and will bring together beneficiaries to explore how lived experience can influence learning from the programme. Let Andy know if you and the people you work with would like to join.
- Exploring opportunities for **peer research**. This is something we'd like to test out at the learning forum above, but let us know if the people you work with might be interested in getting involved.

Get in touch with Andy: andy.williams@revolving-doors.org.uk

Sharing learning from the programme

We would also like to tell more people about the amazing work taking place across the HtC programme. We'd love to know if you would be interested in:

- Helping to **deliver a session at the National Event** on 26th September to share learning from your project.
- **Speaking about the HtC programme at an external event** with the support of the LSE team.

We have also been in touch with a number of partnerships about visiting you as part of a case study this year. Let us know if you would like us to visit you!

Get in touch with the team: HelpThroughCrisis@ipsos.com

Accessing support

As well as the written resources and events, we also provide:

- **1:1 support** on a huge range of topics from evaluation to co-production. Get in touch with the team and we can connect you to the person best placed to offer support. Or you can look at the contact details at the end of this report.
- **Online resources** – all of our written resources are stored on Google Drive, but you can also connect to others via Slack. For example, some partnerships have arranged visits to each other through Slack.

Please let us know if there is anything further we can provide support with. Get in touch with the team: HelpThroughCrisis@ipsos.com

THANK YOU!

Thank you to **everyone** who has taken part in our networking, learning and sharing activities. And especially those who've given up their time to share what they've learned in more detail, to form case studies in our reports:

- *Mancroft Advice Project*
 - *Telford & Wrekin Citizens Advice*
 - *The Bond Board*
 - *Avon and Bristol Law Centre*
 - *Bevan Healthcare CIC*
 - *Gipton Supported Independent Living*
 - *Hackney Migrants Centre*
 - *Praxis Community Projects and St Mungos*
 - *Birmingham Rathbone*
 - *No Limits*
 - *North East Law Centre Ltd*
 - *Wai Yin Society*
 - *Access Dorset*
 - *Haringey Citizens Advice*
 - *Fiscus North Ltd*
 - *Mind in Furness*
 - *Hull and East Riding Citizens Advice Bureau Ltd*
 - *Ravenscliffe Community Association*
 - *The YOU Trust*

We're always keen to come and hear what you are doing, so let us know if you'd like to feature as a case study in the future!



Photos from case study visits to HtC partnerships.

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OUR TEAM CONTACTS

Please do get in touch with any members of the team below if you would like specific help or support. You can also contact the Help through Crisis email account and we will pass on your message to the best person.

- **Any questions:** HelpThroughCrisis@ipsos.com
- Andy Williams can help with **co-production:** Andy.Williams@revolving-doors.org.uk
- Will Davies can help with **evaluation and partnership working:** William.Davies@nefconsulting.com
- Catherine Crick can help with **evaluation:** Catherine.Crick@ipsos.com
- Anita Van Mill can help with attendance at any of **our events:** Anita@hopkinsvanmil.co.uk

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APPENDIX A: NETWORK OF HELP THROUGH CRISIS PARTNERSHIPS

North West

- Carlisle Eden Mind - *Connect*
- KeyRing- *The Ancora Project*
- Lancashire west - *People in Crisis*
- Manchester Mind - *Happy 2 Help*
- Mencap Liverpool - *Reaching Out & Moving On (#WhatHelpedMe)*
- Middleton Day Centre - *The Enhance Project*
- Mind in Furness - *Positive Changes for Positive Lives, a Barrow Advice Hub project*
- Citizens Advice Rossendale and Hyndburn - *Rossendale Crisis Support*
- Salford Citizens Advice - *Salford Crisis Support*
- Shap Ltd - *Bringing Balance Back project*
- The Bond Board - *Homeless Advice and Resilience*
- The Brick - *Queens Hall Action on Poverty - Inspire to Attain*
- Urban Outreach Bolton - *Urban Outreach Living Well*
- Wai Yin Society - *Way Out of Crisis*
- Women Centre - *Women Making Changes*

North West cont.

- The Bond Board - *Door to door furniture recycling*
- The Brick - *ReBUILDing Lives*
- The Larder - *Community Food Hub*

North East

- Fiscus North - *Sunderland ACES - SAFE project*
- Middlesbrough & Stockton Mind - *Firm Foundations*
- North East Law Centre - *Up a Height - support for families in crisis*
- Oasis Aquila Housing - *Resolving Crisis in Gateshead*
- Stockton District AIS - *Give us a break*

Yorkshire and the Humber

- Asylum Support Appeals Project - *Assisting Asylum Seekers in Crisis in Yorkshire and Humberside*
- Better Leeds Communities - *Leeds Crisis Support Service and Community Exchange*

Yorkshire and the Humber cont.

- Bevan Healthcare CIC - *New Futures, Bradford*
- Gipton Supported Independent Living - *Open Doors (Gipton and Harehills)*
- Hull and East Riding Citizens Advice - *The Breakthrough Project*
- Ravenscliffe Community Association - *Free from Crisis*
- Ravenscliffe Community Association - *Combat waste, create taste*
- The Freedom Centre - *Freedom Fresh Food*

West Midlands

- Birmingham MIND - *WELLcome Home: Hospital Discharge Navigator Service*
- Birmingham Rathbone - *Rebuild my Life (Crisis Support)*
- Coventry Citizens Advice - *ROOTED*
- Citizens Advice South Warwickshire - *Reach Out and Help*
- Telford & Wrekin Citizens Advice - *Helping hands out of Hardship*
- Wyre Forest Nightstop – *Axis*
- Feeding Britain - *Community Food Hubs*

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APPENDIX A: NETWORK OF HELP THROUGH CRISIS PARTNERSHIPS

East Midlands

- Direct Help & Advice Ltd- *Derbyshire Bi-lingual Crisis Buddy Service*
- Nottingham Womens Centre - *EVOLVE*
- Re:store Northampton - *The Hub*

South West

- Access Dorset - *Help Through Crisis Dorset*
- Avon and Bristol Law Centre - *Just Ask*
- Bevan Healthcare CIC - *New Futures, Bradford*
- Citizens Advice Stroud & Cotswold Districts Ltd - *Help through Crisis Stroud and Cotswold Districts*
- The Matthew Tree project - *Building lives in Bristol*
- The Matthew Tree - Bristol Food Hub - *Rebuilding Lives Food Hub*

South East

- Citizens Advice in North & North West Kent - *Preventing Actual and Threatened Homelessness*
- Isle of Wight Citizens Advice - *Isle help You Through Crisis*

South East

- No Limits - *Overcoming the Odds -help young adults in hardship crisis*
- Oxford Citizens Advice - *Oxford Stronger Together*
- Strood Community Projects - *Medway REAP - Restoration, Empowerment, Action and Purpose*
- The You Trust - *Circles of Support*
- MindOut LGBTQ - *LGBTQ Hardship Advocacy Project*

East of England

- Cambridge Citizens Advice - *The Cambridge Crisis Network (CCN)*
- Citizens Advice Luton - *Luton Crisis Advice and Support Project*
- Citizens Advice Mid Norfolk - *Mid & South Norfolk Advice and Support*
- Mancroft Advice Project - *Norwich Young Person's Advice Partnership - From Crisis to Opportunity*

London

- Ashford Place - *Independent Lifestyles*
- Community Links Trust - *Tackling hardship in Newham through one-to-one support*
- Ealing CVS - *Ealing Crisis Navigator project*
- East End Citizens Advice - *East End Crisis, Empowerment & change project*
- Hackney Migrants Centre - *Moving out of hardship: supporting vulnerable migrants in London*
- Haringey Citizens Advice - *Crutch in a Crisis*
- Praxis - *Street legal*
- South West London Law Centres - *Stepping Stones to Stability: Collaboration across SW London*
- Wandsworth Citizens Advice - *Community Centred Help Through Hardship Crisis in Wandsworth*
- Ashford Place - *Independent Lifestyles Weekend Project*
- Little Village - *Building Our Village*

England wide

- The Hubbub Foundation - *Community Fridge Network*

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Please get in touch!



HelpThroughCrisis@ipsos.com



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