

Sams

WELLBEING HUB + CAFE

Interim reporting

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Strengthening communities with

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Strengthen community with SZC

Background

Established a decade ago, SAM's café in Lowestoft was originally set up as a charitable ground-floor eatery and safe training base for vulnerable young people breaking into the hospitality sector. Over the following years, the community space has assisted thousands of people across Lowestoft through its range of charitable support services (including homelessness and mental health).

During the Coronavirus pandemic, the café remained operational by providing home-cooked (and) delivered community meals to those most vulnerable to the disease. Sadly, post-COVID and the subsequent 'Cost of Living' crisis, combined with dwindling funding streams, the service nearly disappeared from the high street in early 2024.

However, aware of the situation and its importance to Lowestoft and its communities, SZC agreed in spring 2024 to assist with the reawakening of its use into a 'modernised one-stop community hub,' to ensure this beacon of hope wasn't lost in a time when communities needed it most.

After a modest refurbishment involving charity TEAMViY (who assist young people with learning trade skills whilst renovating community spaces), SAMS Hub and Café has been revived, not only to provide help and guidance to individuals, but to provide bright, fresh safe meeting spaces for local grassroots organisations and community groups to utilise.

To date, the service has been publicised 5+ times in local print and twice with regional BBC programming, including a dedicated full morning show from the premises.

Sams unwavering simply promise to our customers...

'If we can't help you, we will introduce you to someone who can!'



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Spotlight on clients so far...(May 24-April 25)

376 Unique clients seeking support

Breakdown

- 60 Advice/Guidance (appointment)
- 149 Advice/Guidance (drop in)
- 31 Referrals
- 138 Developed through a safe space visits*

* Multi time visitors – gaining trust before further core support is provided



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Spotlight outcomes so far...(May 24-April 25)

849 Positive client outcomes from support provided

Breakdown

46	Receiving employment support from Sams
9	Clients assisted into employment*
283	Managing my mental health (MH) *Clients achieving employment due to mental health support
219	Improving relationships
201	Improved life skills
30	Managing physical health
24	Finance planning
31	Housing/resettlement
219	Safety plans
201	Managing substance misuse
8	Tenancy support
9	Making connections



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Collaboration

(Enabled with SZC support)

Sams has not only become a beacon of hope for individuals. In addition, the service provides a base for personal/group meeting spaces for 40+ statutory organisations and local grassroots charities.

Beneficiaries include:

- NSFT Community MH / OH Teams
- Turning Point (inc. Youth)
- Shaw Trust
- Thrive NEET Employment Services
- Neighbourhood Nurturers
- Menscraft
- GYROS
- Sober Spaces
- Sunrise Studios (Youth Music)
- Multiply Suffolk
- Suffolk Warm Homes
- MAP (Mancroft Advice Project)
- Waveney Dual Diagnosis service
- Status Creative CIC
- SZC Employment Team
- Staying Close Youth
- Community Policing outreach venue
- Suffolk Knitters Group
- Lowestoft Town Council
- ANDYSMANCLUB (coming soon)
- Restart Seetec
- MIND employment



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Community Events / Support

Community enrichment also takes form through key awareness events and discretionary support that raises hope, aspirations and life chances locally.

Events highlights

- 3 Quarterly 'Cost of Living' Community days (multi-agency)
- 12 Wellbeing Walks / Tea and Talk sessions
- 48 Strike a Chord / Jam Café sessions (Youth music)
- 5 Employment Drop-ins (SZWC) TBC
- 8 Women's wellbeing/menopause/clothes exchange evenings
- Many Breakfast Clubs (in school Summer holidays)
- 87 Essential food kits donated to struggling families
- 5 'Meet on the Beat' surgeries with Suffolk Constabulary
- 8 Screenings for Lowestoft's Sunrise Film Festival
- 17 Saturday 'Warm Rooms' (Dec-March)
- 40 Weekly wellbeing groups (Mindfulness)
- 4 Half-term family afternoons
- 3 Local volunteer spotlight days
- 3 Barista workshops
- Regular 121 Thrive employment appointments (M-F)



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Case Study 1

Background:

Arthur, 65, lives alone with minimal family contact and no close friends. After losing a job he deeply valued, he fell into emotional distress, compounded by loneliness and limited literacy skills.

Challenges:

- Loss of routine and purpose following unemployment
- Social isolation and lack of support network
- Difficulty managing day-to-day tasks due to not being able to read or write
- Signs of depression and low self-esteem

Support from Sam's:

- Regular emotional support and guidance from Hub Manager Tracey
- Help with reading and managing letters
- Participation in social activities like meditation, group walks, and daily chats
- A welcoming environment that offers routine, connection, and practical support

Outcome:

Arthur now attends Sam's three to four times a week. He feels emotionally stronger, more connected, and better equipped to manage daily life. He credits the service with transforming his wellbeing, saying he wouldn't cope without it.

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Case Study 2

Background:

Shaun, a self-employed individual, endured seven years of trauma, including a car accident causing permanent spinal damage, complicated surgeries, bereavement, caregiving strain, and a relationship breakdown. These challenges led to a suicide attempt in early 2024.

Challenges:

- Chronic pain and physical disability
- Depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts
- Financial and emotional stress from caregiving and self-employment
- Limited impact from prescribed medications

Turning Point:

After his suicide attempt, Shaun was referred to Oak Tree and introduced to Tracy through the "Sam's Hub and Cafe" service. Despite initial anxiety, he found immediate comfort in the warm, non-judgmental support offered.

Support Received:

- A safe, welcoming environment
- Regular emotional support and consistency
- Help processing trauma without judgment
- Social connection and relief from isolation

Outcome:

Sean reports a major improvement in his mental health. Weekly sessions have given him hope, stability, and a renewed sense of belonging. He credits Hub Manager Tracey and the service with playing a vital role in his recovery.

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Coming soon...

- Building a network for Veteran support (with COMBAT to COFFEE)
- Welcoming ANDYSMANSCLUB
- Establishing in-house catering for external events
- Enhancing volunteering opportunities locally
- Cultivating an outdoor 'cost of living' event

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