

Lunch Club

Impact Report 2022 – 2023

Sheffield City Council, Voluntary Sector Liaison Team

Introduction

It has been a very challenging year for Lunch Clubs and their members, in the face of these challenges it is clear that organisers and their volunteers are determined to continue to provide a vital service to their members. The good news is that social eating is looking to rebound. We have added one new club this year and we are anticipating others starting soon, so watch this space. Below we have laid out the monitoring information and some analysis of the data received from Lunch Clubs for 2022-23. We have also incorporated some information on the difficulties which Community Transport is facing as we recognise that Lunch Clubs are part of a wider system of connecting communities.

The perfect storm of a pandemic swiftly followed by the cost-of-living crisis has disproportionately impacted Lunch clubs and their members leading to a very challenging 2022-2023. We unfortunately saw a number of Lunch Clubs close and a substantial increase in the number of members using Community Transport also hugely impacted by these difficult times.

There is a wide range of social eating groups from across the city but the feedback below is from those which we grant fund.

Annual Statistics

In 2022-2023 £86,432.00 was awarded to 28 Lunch Clubs across Sheffield, which is a lot of custard!

- 1183 sessions by all SCC grant funded Lunch Clubs
- 773 Members across SCC grant funded Lunch Clubs
- 323,647 Meals served across all SCC grant funded Lunch Clubs
- 350 Volunteers across all SCC grant funded Lunch Clubs

Lunch Club average costs:

- £4.13 – Average Lunch Club meal cost to members
- £2.08 – Average cost of community transport to members

Age Breakdown of Lunch Club Members

- 85+ = 47%
- 75 to 84 = 35%
- 65 to 74 = 12%
- 55 to 64 = 5%
- 45 to 54 = 1%

Volunteering statistics:

The commitment of those who volunteer for their Lunch Clubs is significant:

1. 350 Volunteers across 28 Lunch Clubs
2. 104 volunteer hours each week
3. 5200 Volunteer hours each year
4. Equivalent to £1,279,528 each year

The average Lunch Club volunteer gives up nearly four hours of their time every week to help deliver Lunch Clubs across Sheffield.

Volunteers have fed back that their time at the Lunch Clubs is rewarding:

- “A new volunteer said we have been a life saver”
- “A lady volunteer of 80 and recently widowed thanked us all for ‘giving her, her life back.’”

The number of volunteers has decreased from pre-pandemic levels – the average number of volunteers per club was 12 and its now 10 per club.

We are aware of the significant need for more volunteers across the sector and are looking at ways to attract new volunteers to Lunch Clubs and Community Transport roles.

The Lunch Club Difference!

Lunch Club organisers have told us about the positive impact the club has on its members:

- *“One gentleman told me ‘it’s the only time he gets out all week’”*
- *“A new friendship group has emerged as three ladies have exchanged phone numbers and now chat to each other during the week.”*
- *“One member had a stroke...she was determined to return to the club which she did in October”.*
- *“Several members have made new friendships and meet outside club time.”*
- *“The diners and helpers have been so wonderful surrounding me with love and care.”*
- *“My Dad has ABSOLUTELY loved this Lunch Club, Thank you” Text from his daughter.”*

Challenges

Lunch Club organisers are adapting and rising to meet a number of challenges at the moment...

Utility Costs

- Energy costs have increased significantly. the latest bill was over £500 for gas alone.
- Members have to keep their coats on and use blankets to keep warm.

- Energy costs mean we are being asked to increase the donations to transport and venue.

Covid19

- Multiple sessions were cancelled for the majority of clubs either due to members, transport volunteers or volunteers themselves due to contracting covid.
- We sadly lost 15 members during lockdown.

Cost of Living

- We can no longer have long term menu planning but instead rely on cheap deals in the supermarket.
- I had to go begging to local supermarkets for support with vegetables, and extras for the Christmas Meal for the club.

Community Transport

Transport to a Lunch Club can be a necessity for its members because without it many wouldn't be able to attend and would be isolated at home. We have received substantial feedback from our Lunch Clubs of the difficulties with Community Transport at the moment. This section will explore some of the data we have on Community Transport and the feedback we have received.

24 Lunch Clubs offer Community Transport

9% increase in the number of members using community transport compared with the last comparable year pre-pandemic.

5% decrease in number of members attending a Lunch Club across the city

Across the 23 representative Lunch Clubs for the period between 2019-2020 and 2023-2024. There will be an increase of 821 community transport users.

Reasons why the number of members using community transport has increased:

- LC Members are having to travel further to access a lunch club.
- Pandemic has led to a decline in physical health of members.

Community Transport Feedback

Below are excerpts from some of the feedback the voluntary sector liaison team have received from Lunch Clubs, members and community transport organisations.

- Community Transport are short of volunteer bus drivers
- the pool of volunteer drivers will significantly reduce because many will not have the D1 licence.
- All 3 buses out all day everyday easily - a lot of capacity but lack in volunteers.
- Volunteers have had to give people lifts when buses were cancelled.
- Buses are more full than before lockdown.
- Really struggled to get transport for a trip.
- not enough volunteers to drive them for all jobs all week.

- In the last 3 years there has been noticeably less capacity in Community Transport in Sheffield.
- The lack of availability of community transport and drivers has meant that we are using another travel service which are very reliable but also expensive increasing our running costs significantly.
- Difficulty accessing transport has frequently been raised as a theme at networking meetings.
- If we had another minibus and driver, I feel that we would be able to bring more members into the Club.

Activities

Lunch Clubs provide activities at each session and run special events.

- Origami was interesting.
- We celebrated the 102nd birthday of a member
- Basic conversations in French and Spanish
- A chiropodist visited to discuss footcare.
- An advisor came to talk about making wills, powers of attorney, preparing for a possible future care.
- Sports for all with local secondary school children. This occurs every month and we have a youth worker supporting us. The children buddy up with the members to play, carpet bowls, table tennis, table football, skittles, dominoes and air hockey. This has been very popular.

VAS: Lunch Club Impact Report

Voluntary Action Sheffield are a partner of Sheffield City Council we work with them and provide funding to ensure that Lunch Clubs are able to access support regarding governance, training, volunteering, risk and change management. VAS also maintain and manage the referral pathway into Lunch Clubs.

We supported 42 Lunch Clubs this year through 1:1 guidance, regular emails containing information and resources, training opportunities, and regular network meetings for Lunch Club Organisers. While monthly Zoom meetings provided Lunch Club leaders the opportunity for peer learning, support and information sharing. Guest speakers on subjects including dementia, falls prevention, funding, volunteer recruitment, and transport.

We provided two new Lunch Clubs with support to get established. Lunch Club volunteers were also able to access First Aid training and Food Hygiene and Allergens organised by VAS.

VAS: Lunch Club Feedback

"ZOOM sessions organised by VAS, alongside continuing support, have been so valuable through this year. VAS was especially helpful in brokering Training for Sheffield Lunch clubs. Our volunteers took up training in Food Hygiene and First Aid in May. It would have been impossible for individual Lunch Club organisers to negotiate a fair deal otherwise. Certificated training is a key 'gift' for volunteers who do so much for nothing."

“Being in contact with other lunch clubs on Zoom has been very useful in several ways and it is reassuring to know that there are other groups in Sheffield facing similar problems and successes. It was useful to discuss the increasing price of food and thus the necessity to put fees up. A comparison with what other lunch clubs charge eased my "guilt" over the £1 increase. My aim not to compromise on the standard of food was shared by others and I bear this in mind when preparing a menu and at the supermarket.”

“During the lockdowns we went to the Zoom meetings, which really helped us with ideas and hearing how other clubs were faring, but we don't feel we need them now, although I always read the minutes, and have used a couple of ideas.”

Going forward:

- Priorities for 2023 and beyond!
- Explore ways to increase access to community transport.
- Increase the diversity of Lunch Clubs and their members.
- Explore ways of increasing volunteer numbers at Lunch Clubs
- Look at ways to alleviate the impact of cost-of-living on clubs.
- Continue to support Lunch Club infrastructure.

Thank you from the Voluntary Sector Liaison Team

Contact us:

If you would like to talk to us about anything contained within this report please don't hesitate to get in touch using the details below.

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