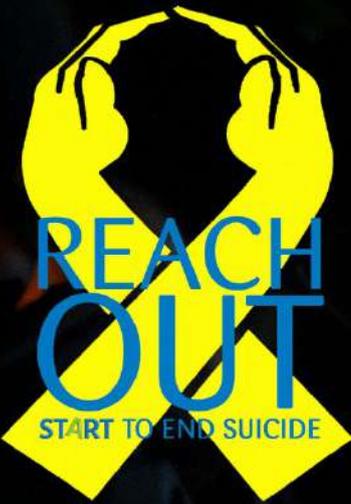
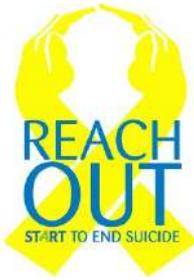


APRIL 2024—MARCH 2025

# IMPACT



REPORT



Welcome to the **Reach Out; Start to End Suicide Impact Report 2024/25**. *Reach Out; Start to End Suicide* is a grassroots movement dedicated to preventing suicide through community connection, open conversation, and accessible support for anyone struggling with their mental health. **Thank you** to our **Funders, Volunteers, and Supporters**. Your support helps us to continue working toward a world where suicide is never seen as the only option.

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# From Survivor to Lifesaver



Councillor Tanya Burch, Ceremonial Mayor of the City of Salford & Dennis Baldwin, Reach Out; START to End Suicide

## Dennis Baldwin, Honoured with Salford's Mayor's Citizen Award

**Dennis Baldwin, Reach Out; START to End Suicide Project Manger** has been honoured with the **Ceremonial Mayor's Citizen Award** in Salford for his exceptional work in suicide prevention and community engagement. Dennis draws deeply from his own lived experience as a suicide attempt survivor to lead with empathy, authenticity, and strength. He is the driving force behind the 'Reach Out; Start to End Suicide' campaign which raises awareness, reduces stigma, and provides vital support across the City. Dennis has transformed his personal experience of being a multiple attempt survivor into a powerful force for good, using his story to shatter the stigma surrounding suicide and inspire others to speak out. **Councillor Tanya Burch, Ceremonial Mayor of the City of Salford** said 'Through his lived experience and the challenges he has overcome, Dennis inspires others faced with impacts of suicide. His tireless work has been encouraging many in our city. He has been 'here to hear' for years now and we appreciate his vulnerability that has become his strength to comfort and empower many in the city of Salford'.

# Assertive Outreach

## Pizza & more than just a *'one off conversation'*

On November 20th, the 'Pop-Up Pizzeria' at the Old Town Hall Café, led by our dedicated lived experience engagement worker, successfully hosted an 'Assertive Outreach' event.

Designed to foster an inclusive and relaxed atmosphere, the event brought together community members with physical illnesses, recognised as a high-risk group, for pizza and meaningful discussions on mental health and suicide prevention

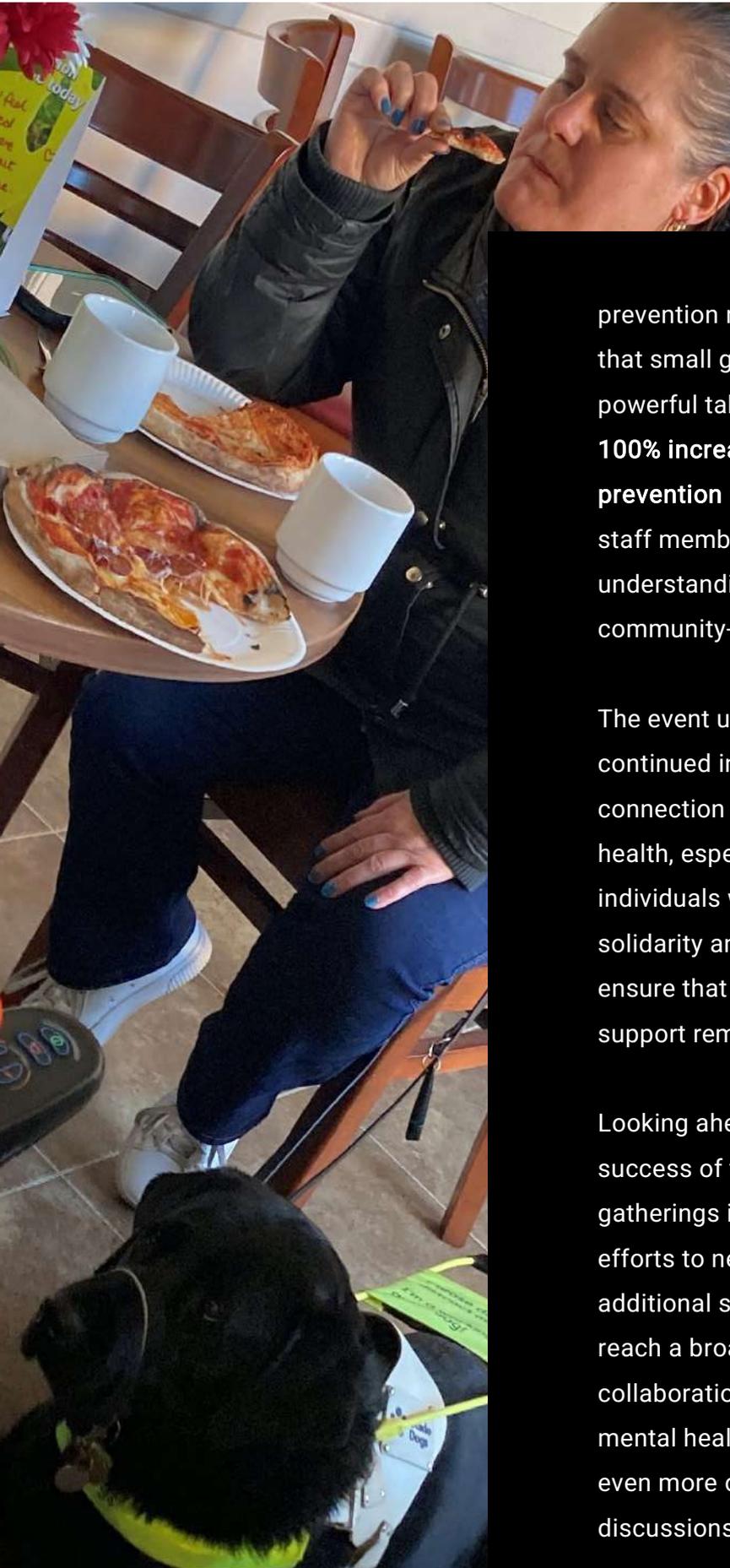
With over **30 attendees**, including members of the **Salford Disability & Mental Health Forums** and their caregivers, the event fostered an atmosphere of connection and understanding. One participant shared, 'This event made me feel seen and heard,' highlighting the importance of providing spaces where lived experiences can be validated and shared. Another noted, 'I often feel isolated due to my disability, but talking



Eccles Old Town Hall Cafe

to others here has been incredibly touching.' A caregiver added, 'It's wonderful to see a space where people can open up without fear of judgment.'

To reinforce our message, we distributed 'Thank You' cards featuring suicide



prevention resources, reminding attendees that small gestures can make a big impact. A powerful takeaway from the event was the **100% increase in awareness of suicide prevention** among participants. Additionally, staff members expressed a deeper understanding of the importance of community-led discussions on mental health.

The event underscored the need for continued initiatives that encourage connection and education around mental health, especially within communities of individuals with disabilities. By fostering solidarity and amplifying voices, we can ensure that no one feels alone and that support remains accessible to all.

Looking ahead, we plan to build on the success of this event by hosting similar gatherings in the future. Expanding outreach efforts to new venues and incorporating additional support services will allow us to reach a broader audience. Through collaboration with local organisations and mental health advocates, we aim to create even more opportunities for meaningful discussions and support networks.

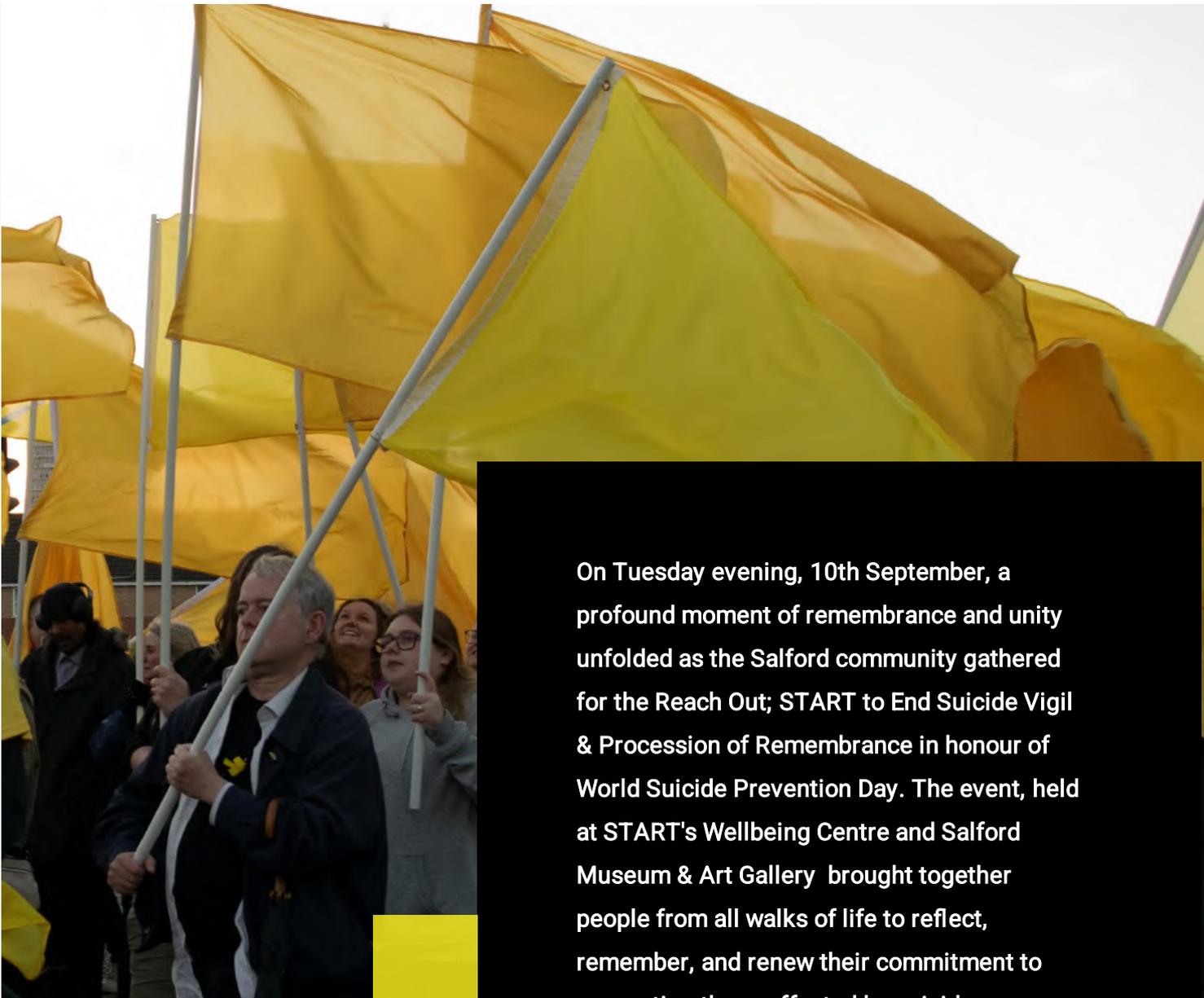
FUNDED BY: GM NHS ICB

Assertive Outreach

# A Procession of Love

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## WSPD Vigil & Procession of Remembrance



On Tuesday evening, 10th September, a profound moment of remembrance and unity unfolded as the Salford community gathered for the Reach Out; START to End Suicide Vigil & Procession of Remembrance in honour of World Suicide Prevention Day. The event, held at START's Wellbeing Centre and Salford Museum & Art Gallery brought together people from all walks of life to reflect, remember, and renew their commitment to supporting those affected by suicide.

As **144 vibrant yellow flags** waved in the evening breeze, each one stood as a stark and poignant reminder of the lives lost to suicide in Salford over the past five years. The sight was both heart-wrenching and inspiring, a visual representation of a collective grief, but also a



rallying cry for hope and action.

The procession was led by the **'Drumming Up Co.'** **Samba Drumming Up Group**, setting a powerful rhythm for the evening, guiding the crowd through the streets with a beat that resonated in the hearts of all present. The sounds echoed the urgency of the messages, time is precious, and the need for action is now.

**Rebecca Long Bailey, MP for Salford & Eccles**, delivered a heartfelt statement, read by **Dennis Baldwin, the Reach Out; START to End Suicide Project Manager**, reaffirming her commitment to working towards a future where no life is lost to suicide stating 'Today is a day to cherish your memories filled with love, to celebrate them alongside missing them. But it's also important to use today to continue the fight to make sure the support and funding is given to our mental health and support services and to give so many the courage to reach out for help when they need it. I know so much more needs to be done to fund mental health and support services'.

**Jenni Smith, Loaves & Fishes**, moved the crowd with her heartfelt speech, underscoring the challenges faced by those affected by homelessness and the importance of addressing both physical and emotional needs. In her words, 'We are not just here to mourn; we

are here to demand better, to create a future where no one feels forgotten.’ Her call to action echoed throughout the event, emphasising the urgent need for mental health support alongside addressing issues such as food poverty and homelessness.

One of the most emotional moments of the evening came from **Kasia Halani**, who shared the tragic yet hopeful story behind the creation of

**Jak’s World**. Kasia lost her child, **Jakub**, to suicide, and has since turned her grief into action, establishing **Jak’s World** as a beacon of support for those who might otherwise suffer in silence. Her story was both heart-wrenching and inspiring, reminding everyone in attendance of the profound importance of empathy, understanding, and continued vigilance in the fight to prevent suicide.



Jenni Smith, Salford Loaves & Fishes



H2S, Rapper



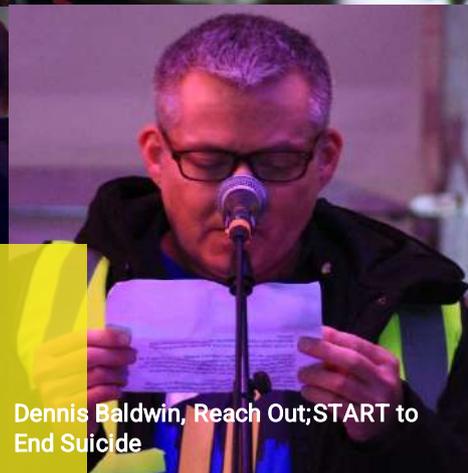
Kasia Halani, the founder of Jak’s World



Paul Dennett, Mayor of Salford



Judd Skelton, Strategic Commissioning Lead – Community Mental Health Teams Transformation, Suicide Prevention & Bereavement Support NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care & Councillor Heather Fletcher, Deputy Ceremonial Mayor of the City of Salford Tom Stannard, CE Salford City Council



Dennis Baldwin, Reach Out;START to End Suicide





Streetwise Opera



Andy Green, Poet

'The last time I saw Jakub, I had just returned home from work. I touched his silky hair and I kissed him on the cheek. He didn't say anything. A few hours later while I was asleep. He left the house and I never saw him again.'

'I ask all parents to do it for their children. Take the training, face the fear and ask your children directly if they have suicidal thoughts. It's not an easy conversation, but it could be the one that saves a life.' said Kasia Halani, Jak's World.

**Judd Skelton, GM Suicide Prevention & Postvention Programme** spoke of the work being done across GM, saying 'Support people who are bereaved by suicide but also help prevent suicide. Our work started really about five years ago when we launched our Shining Light and Suicide campaign. When we launched that campaign and we were developing it, we spoke to a lot of people with lived experience of suicide, people who were bereaved by suicide, people who attempted suicide or had suicidal thoughts, to really understand what they wanted from the strategy, what they wanted from the campaign.'

The event was enriched by a diverse array of

powerful performances, including moving recitals by local poet **Andy Green**, raw and honest lyrics from rapper **H2S** that pierced the silence, and the melodic tones of **Streetwise Opera**, a group comprised of individuals affected by homelessness, which brought many to tears.



Speeches from the Vigils host **Paul Dennett, Mayor of Salford**, who emphasised the need for continued community support, and ‘These tragedies remind us that our society still has a long way to go in supporting its most vulnerable. But tonight is a reminder that we can all be part of that change. We can break the stigma and challenge the silence surrounding mental health,’ said Mayor Dennett.

The Vigil culminated in a solemn **Roll of Remembrance**, where the names of those lost to suicide were read aloud by **Judd Skelton, Chair GM Suicide Prevention Executive**, **Tom Stannard; CE Salford Council and Deputy**

**Ceremonial Mayor, Councillor Heather Fletcher**. Each name, each flag, each story shared was a heart-breaking reminder of lives cut short, but it also served as a beacon of collective hope—a reminder that no one is alone in their struggles.

As the night drew to a close, the message was clear: Salford is united in both grief and determination. The community will continue to fight for those who feel lost, for those struggling in silence, and for the memory of those who are no longer with us.

**Together, we will continue to Reach Out and work tirelessly to Start to End Suicide.**



Mike Palmer, 3 Dads Walking





FUNDED BY: GM NHS ICB

PHOTOS (Inc Cover):  
@Saulomon\_Hashmi\_Photography



On Saturday, 14th September, a heartfelt fundraiser organised by **Jennifer O'Neil**, who tragically lost her son **Daniel**, to suicide was held. Demonstrating incredible strength and compassion, Jennifer and her family brought the community together to raise awareness around mental health and support those in need. Through their efforts, they successfully raised **£1,500**, which has been generously shared between two vital organisations: **Reach Out** and **Loaves & Fishes**. This event not only honoured the memory of Jennifer's son but also made a meaningful contribution to local support services, helping to ensure others facing crisis are not alone.



# Art as Healing

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## The Impact of the Surviving Suicide : Attempt Survivor Peer Support Art Group

**The Surviving Suicide: Attempt Survivor Peer Support Art Group offers a creative and emotionally supportive space for the fourteen group members with living experiences of suicidality.**

Facilitated by Dennis, a skilled and empathetic group leader, the sessions foster healing through peer connection and artistic expression, proving to be not only therapeutic but life-affirming for those who attend.

All participants rated their **overall experience** in the group as **excellent**, with every person stating they would **'definitely' return**. The environment created was consistently described as **safe and welcoming**; most participants reported feeling safe at all times, and one noted feeling safe most of the time. This sense of emotional safety allowed individuals to express themselves without fear of judgment. One participant described it as **'being in a safe space to speak about anything,'** while another reflected, **'art lets my mind breathe. For two hours, my head has somewhere to go.'**

A key outcome of the group was the fostering of connection and a reduction in isolation. All of the participants stated that the group helped them feel connected to others with similar experiences. Through shared stories, silent understanding, and the unspoken language of art, bonds were formed that transcended words. This connection was particularly meaningful for participants who often felt alone in their day-to-day lives. One individual shared, **'having the time and space to focus with others who have understanding and are**





non-judgemental' made a significant difference.

The impact on emotional well-being was both measurable and meaningful. Participants rated their mental health and well-being before attending the group at an average of **3.25** out of 10. After attending, this score rose to **7.75**—a 138% improvement in their **mental health and wellbeing**.

They reported feeling more **hopeful, better equipped to manage difficult emotions**, and **less overwhelmed by suicidal thoughts**. On average, participants gave a **4.75** out of 5 rating for **improvements in mood** and a **5** out of 5 for **feeling welcome** in the group and for **recommending it to others**.

The ability to express emotions through art was also highly valued, with one participant stating, 'Dennis lets you be creative, independent, and supports your work.' Another participant commented, 'my thoughts are deeper and darker than I want them to be... but

for 2 hours, my head has somewhere to go.' Dennis, the facilitator, was universally praised for his role in creating a non-judgmental, empowering atmosphere. Participants highlighted his attentiveness and sensitivity, with one noting, 'Dennis runs a great group. I missed it a lot when it lost funding.' His presence was clearly central to the group's success, not only as an organiser but as a source of trust, support, and inspiration.

The participants also offered suggestions for the future of the group. A common theme was the desire for more frequent sessions, ideally held more than once per week. There was also a strong call for sustained funding to ensure the group's continuity, as well as recognition of the need for inclusive outreach, particularly for individuals who feel less represented, such as those experiencing gender dysphoria. As one person put it simply, 'to keep it going so people like me have somewhere not to feel alone.'

The Surviving Suicide Peer Support Art Group stands as a model of community-based, trauma-informed mental health support. Through the combination of art, peer support, and a safe environment, participants were able to reconnect with themselves and others in meaningful ways. The measurable improvements in well-being, along with heartfelt testimonials from participants, point to the profound value of such programs. Continuing to support and expand this work is not just beneficial—it is essential for suicide prevention and emotional recovery.

**FUNDED BY: New Makers Yard**

**Art as Healing**

# Rhythms of Belonging

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## The Impact of a Community Samba Drumming Group on Wellbeing and Social Connection

Community arts programs are increasingly recognised as valuable tools in promoting mental health, reducing loneliness, and enhancing overall well-being.

We evaluated the impact of our **Drumming Up Co.**, a samba drumming group that integrates musical engagement with peer connection and emotional support. We aimed to assess participants' experiences and the group's impact on their sense of connection, confidence, and mental health.

All twelve participants that completed the evaluation questionnaire rated their overall experience in the group as excellent, with unanimous agreement that they would 'definitely' return for future sessions. This indicates a high level of satisfaction and value in the program. The facilitators were also universally praised, with all participants stating they felt 'very much' welcomed and supported.

One of the core objectives of the group was to foster a sense of belonging and alleviate social





isolation. All participants reported that the group helped them feel more connected to others. **Eleven** out of **twelve** participants stated that the drumming sessions helped reduce their feelings of loneliness, with **twelve** describing the impact as significant. This aligns with comments highlighting the value of being part of something bigger: *'Love being part of a family'* and *'Great friendships, enjoyed the parade in aid of suicide awareness.'*

Drumming, as a shared rhythmic activity, was widely enjoyed by participants; **eleven** reported they enjoyed it 'very much,' with **one** responding 'somewhat.' Participants also reported meaningful emotional and psychological benefits. **Twelve** said the group significantly improved their mood and well-being, and **twelve** indicated the drumming helped them feel more confident and better able to express themselves.

Qualitative responses underscored the emotional richness of the experience. Participants described the group as *'the*

*highlight of each week,'* and appreciated the *'relaxed atmosphere'* and opportunities to *'learn new rhythms.'* Facilitators Cheryl and Dennis received particular praise, with comments emphasising their supportive presence and engaging teaching styles: *'Love how Cheryl teaches us. Makes it worthwhile. Dennis is great support.'*

When asked to rate changes in their mental health and well-being, participants showed marked improvement. Before joining the group, the average self-rating of mental health was **4.38** out of 10. After participating, this rose to **7**; a **60% increase**, indicating a meaningful uplift in perceived mental health.

On five key psychosocial indicators (social connection, loneliness, mood, confidence, and stress levels), the majority of responses fell within the 4–5 range, indicating moderate to strong improvement.

Indicator	Response (Score 1 low - 5 high)	Improvement Score (Avg)
Social connection	4-5 (87%)	High
Reduced loneliness	4-5 (63%)	Moderate-High
Improved mood	4-5 (63%)	High
Confidence in social settings	3-5 (100%)	High
Feeling more relaxed	3-5 (100%)	Moderate

Suggestions for improvement, though minimal, reflect participants' desire to deepen their involvement. Ideas included adding more drums, recruiting more members, and increasing performance opportunities to enhance group cohesion and public engagement. One participant humorously suggested, 'That everyone shuts up when Cheryl is talking—including me.' These comments indicate a sense of ownership and investment in the group's future.

In summary, Drumming Up Co. demonstrates strong outcomes in enhancing participants' emotional well-being, reducing loneliness, and fostering social bonds. Its success lies not only in the engaging nature of drumming, but also in the inclusive, supportive environment created by its facilitators. These findings support continued investment in arts-based community interventions as a meaningful approach to public mental health.

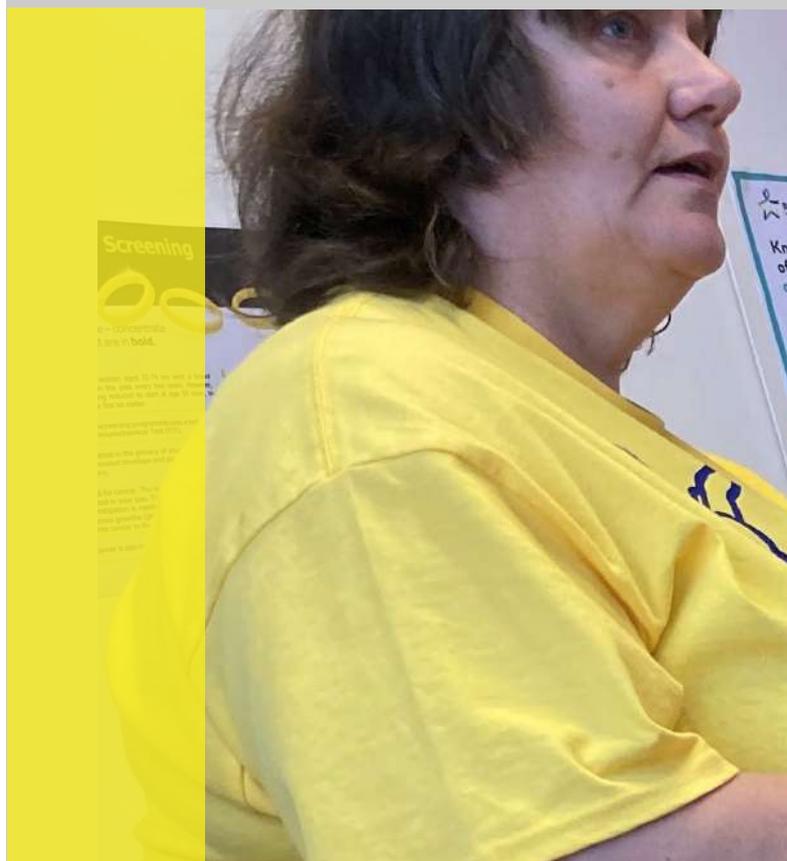
FUNDED BY: The National Lottery

## Bringing Rhythm to Awareness: Creative Cancer Education

START's 'Answer Cancer with Samba Beats' project used the power of rhythm and creativity to promote bowel cancer screening. Funded by the Answer Cancer Round 6 grant, it reached over 60 people—mainly from communities with poor mental health—through samba drumming and accessible health education.

From October to December 2024, Brunswick House hosted eight weekly drumming sessions led by a professional tutor. Alongside the music, participants learned how to access and use bowel cancer screening kits. Two trained volunteers and a project manager ensured a welcoming, inclusive space for 12 members from START's Inspiring Minds programme.

The project ended with a lively 'Samba





# Answer Cancer

## With Samba Drumming Beats

**Drumming Christmas Party,** featuring a performance, a Bowel Cancer-themed Christmas quiz, and educational displays. Attendees celebrated and learned together.

**START** also recruited three Cancer Champions, two of whom completed formal training. These Champions shared resources, encouraged screening, and helped normalise conversations around cancer. One said: 'Having the resources makes it so easy and does away with the

fears.'

The impact was clear: 18 participants committed to screening, and many reported a mindset shift. The project showed that creative, community-led approaches can make health education engaging and effective. **START** plans to continue this work through similar events and its dedicated Cancer Champions—proving that awareness, when paired with connection, can truly change lives.



# We are all Heroes



## Everyday Mental Health Hero

Over the past 12 months, our Everyday Mental Health Hero (EMHH) initiative has seen 891 individuals across Salford take the pledge, complete the training, and proudly wear the EMHH 'HERE TO HEAR' badge—each person becoming part of a growing movement standing up against suicide and stigma.

This milestone isn't just a number. It represents real people, real conversations, and real change across our communities. Each badge signifies a commitment—by individuals, families, and organisations—to break the silence, challenge taboos, and build a culture where mental health is prioritised and suicide prevention is everyone's responsibility.

From powerful group discussions to deeply personal breakthroughs, Dennis, Our Project Manager has helped create spaces where vulnerability is met with empathy, and where stories of struggle become testimonies of



Councillor Mishal Saeed, Executive Support  
Member for Social Care and Mental Health  
Salford City Council



## Case Study: A Neurodivergent Woman with ADHD at the Healthwatch Health Fair

A neurodivergent woman with PTSD sought help for her anxiety and sensory overload. She was struggling to manage her symptoms while caring for her daughter. A tailored safety plan was developed, identifying triggers, coping strategies, and key support individuals. This plan included steps for crisis moments and emphasised clear communication with her support network. She expressed gratitude for the personalised support and planned to discuss the safety plan with her daughters.

She left the Healthwatch Health Fair feeling more confident and connected, with new support networks and tools to manage her daily challenges.

resilience. Through sessions, events, and heartfelt exchanges, the EMHH movement is proving that when we talk about it—honestly, openly, and without judgment—we save lives.

### Heartfelt Conversations & Healing Spaces

Through the powerful award winning ‘Talk About It Mate’, our Project Manager had the privilege of attending sessions in Walkden, Eccles, and Claremont—each one a deeply moving experience that created space for honest dialogue, emotional connection, and community healing. These sessions weren’t just meetings—they were shared journeys of courage, resilience, and mutual support.



‘Talk About It Mate’ sessions welcomed over 40 participants, where deeply personal stories were shared, not only by attendees but by Dennis, a survivor of multiple suicide attempts. By opening up about his lived experiences, he helped guide conversations around recognising warning signs, seeking support, and building resilience.

A recurring theme across these gatherings was **reframing personal struggles**. Rather than viewing them as signs of failure, participants began to see them as proof of their strength and a part of their growth journey. The power of **active listening** and non-judgmental empathy transformed these sessions into safe, healing spaces where people felt seen, heard, and understood.

One conversation in Claremont stood out—a man courageously shared his recent suicidal thoughts. Through empathetic dialogue, he was helped to reframe his experience as a profound act of survival. His story is a reminder of the importance of support spaces that allow individuals to reclaim their strength.

### Stories that Stay With Us

Many attendees bravely shared experiences that touched the entire group. One participant

recalled a moment of crisis where he planned his own death, but instead made the life-saving decision to stop and seek help. He walked into a police station and said, 'I told them how I was feeling suicidal... they didn't rush me, they just listened.' That moment of being heard without judgment was pivotal.

Others shared equally powerful reflections: 'Our struggles don't define who we are; it's how we get through them that truly matters.' 'Being vulnerable isn't a sign of weakness; it's about having the courage to face your truth.'

Two men from Walkden shared harrowing childhood memories of discovering their uncles after suicide. Through the session, they recognised the long-standing trauma and were connected to the Greater Manchester Bereavement Service for support—a testament to the real-world impact of signposting and compassionate engagement.

**World Mental Health Day & Living Well Event**

In celebration of **World Mental Health Day**, EMHH took part in the **Living Well event**, sparking meaningful conversations on workplace mental health. These dialogues helped chip away at the stigma surrounding suicide and mental well-being. As a result, 27 individuals committed to the EMHH pledge, reinforcing our belief in the



power of collective action to foster cultural change.

### EMHH Stalls: Awareness in Action

Throughout the year, our Project Manager brought the EMHH mission to the public via community stalls which included:

**Salford Council (Swinton Civic Centre):** During Mental Health Awareness Week, two EMHH stalls distributed **nearly 200 badges and resource packs**, opening space for dozens of heartfelt conversations.

**Salford Healthwatch Health Fair (Eccles Town Hall):** Over **220 'Here to Hear' badges** were distributed. The initiative reached key organisations like Salford CVS, the Growth Company, Loaves & Fishes, and the Salford Parent Carer Forum—laying the groundwork for broader staff engagement across networks.

**Salford University's Month of Hope:** EMHH was part of a powerful remembrance event, with a tree planting ceremony and minute of silence for lives lost to suicide.

### WSPD Vigil & Procession Of Remembrance

Our pledge board, assisted by volunteers Hannah and Alex, received strong engagement including the presence of high-profile guests.

### The Ripple Effect of Connection

As the year progressed, the ongoing engagement continued to affirm the **transformative impact** of the EMHH model. Across every event, a common thread emerged: **connection heals**. People found courage through community, discovered strength in their vulnerability, and left with the knowledge that they are not alone.



Each badge worn, each conversation had, and each story shared contributes to a wider movement—one that’s actively changing how mental health is understood and supported in Salford.

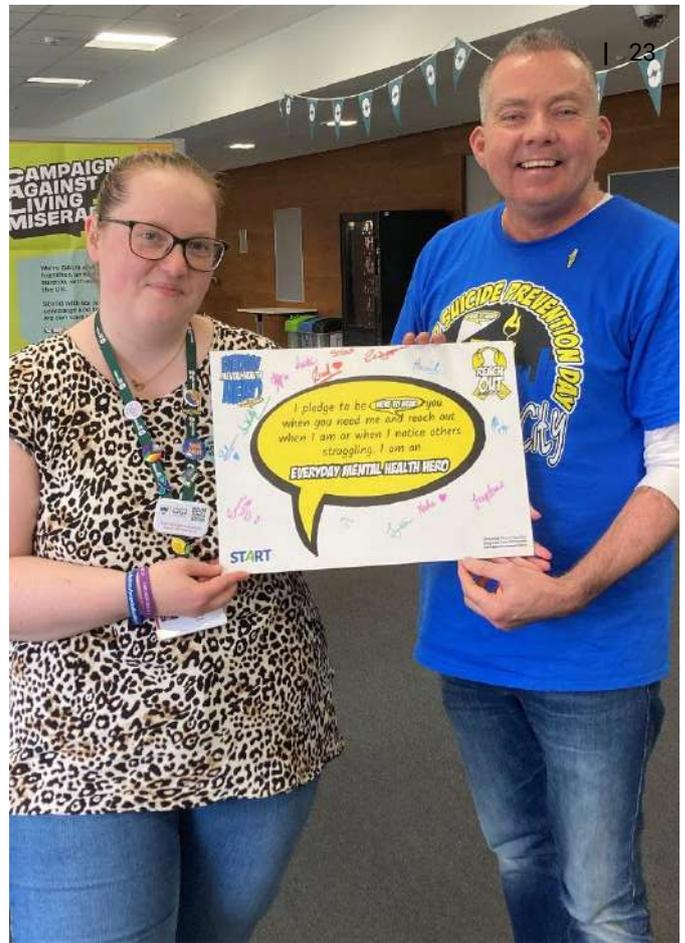
### Looking Ahead

The EMHH program is not just about raising awareness—it’s about changing lives. We look forward to continuing this critical work, building on the foundation of empathy, honesty, and hope that these sessions have helped create.

**Together, we’re not just talking about it.**

**We’re doing something about it.**

**Salford is taking a stand.**



FUNDED BY: GM NHS ICB



# Here to Hear

# TEAM BUILDING CREATIVE AWAY-DAYS



## ABOUT

START is a dynamic charity based in Greater Manchester, dedicated to enhancing mental health and wellbeing through the power of creative arts.

From our state-of-the-art studios in Salford, we invite groups to join our creative away days designed to boost wellbeing.

Choose from a range of creative activities, wellbeing themes or just hire our beautiful indoor or outdoor spaces for your own activities!

## WORKSHOP CHOICES INCLUDE:

- PAINTING
- POTTERY
- WOODWORK
- HORTICULTURE
- CRAFTS
- DRUMMING
- SLEEP WELL
- STRESS LESS
- WRITING FOR WELLBEING
- 5 WAYS TO WELLBEING

## NEXT STEPS

For more details please contact Hannah who will support you to design your own away day.

[hannah@startinspiringminds.org.uk](mailto:hannah@startinspiringminds.org.uk)

# START

Registered charity no.1078837.