



THE JOSEPH COWEN HEALTH CENTRE

SOCIAL VALUE REPORT

Everybody in a better place
Housing | Community | Learning | Wellbeing

Contents

About Tyne

Since 1973, we've been there for those who need us. We support vulnerable people living within the North East, working to tackle some of society's most pressing challenges around homelessness, isolation, addiction, mental health and more. We do it because we believe in people and we see potential in every person.

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Executive Summary

We're delighted to present a summary of the independent social impact evaluation of our Joseph Cowen Health Centre. Based in Newcastle's East End, since 2006 the Centre has provided a well used drop in centre for people experiencing homelessness and insecure housing, focused on improving wellbeing and helping people move forward with their lives.

Along with findings from the independent evaluation, our report also incorporates learning and headlines from a parallel internal review process and subsequent academic evaluation of the Centre's delivery model. It illustrates an impactful and cost effective service, demonstrating 'The Joseph Cowen Health Centre has a protective effect on service users' health and wellbeing' ('Making an Impact' Social Value Report 2023).

- There is a positive shift away from use of emergency healthcare services use and towards an increased use of preventative healthcare, with reduced overall healthcare costs for centre visitors
- 77% of visitors reported an improvement in their mental health
- 73% of visitors say they feel their health has improved since visiting the Centre
- Every £1 invested in the Joseph Cowen Health Centre delivers £13.04 in social value

About this Evaluation

Based on full year data from 21/22, the impact evaluation covered all of Tyne Housing's operations, including the Joseph Cowen Health Centre. It was conducted by Alice Jones Impact Consulting, an independent specialist social impact consultant, who used the Social Return on Investment methodology, incorporating validated measurement tools. With the support of Collaborative Newcastle, it drew on live NHS patient records to build evidence of the Centre's impact on use of NHS services.



**"The place is a community hub
and without it we would be
stuck. Nowhere else nearby
offers the same service"**

– Joseph Cowen Visitor

About the Joseph Cowen Health Centre

The Joseph Cowen Health Centre is run in partnership with North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Newcastle City Council. Initially established in response to a local service gap for people experiencing rough-sleeping or insecure housing, the Centre now operates as a health and wellbeing hub for this highly vulnerable group of people. Providing a space for collaborative working and co-location, including a dedicated clinical space, the Centre delivers harm reduction, primary healthcare and a variety of support services, working in partnership with a range of public and VCS organisations.

The Centre also provides a drop-in facility that offers refreshments, shower and laundry facilities, clothing, housing advice, and a referral point for food bank vouchers. Being located in Byker, Newcastle, the Joseph Cowen Health Centre's East End location is in an area close to people likely to benefit most from its services.

Importantly, it provides a friendly, non-judgmental listening ear in a trusted, safe space.



About the Social Impact Evaluation

In 2019, Tyne commissioned their first independent social value evaluation to better understand the impact of Tyne Housing’s work on the lives of the people they support and the wider community as a whole. These findings helped Tyne create their 2021–2026 Strategic Plan – Putting People First.

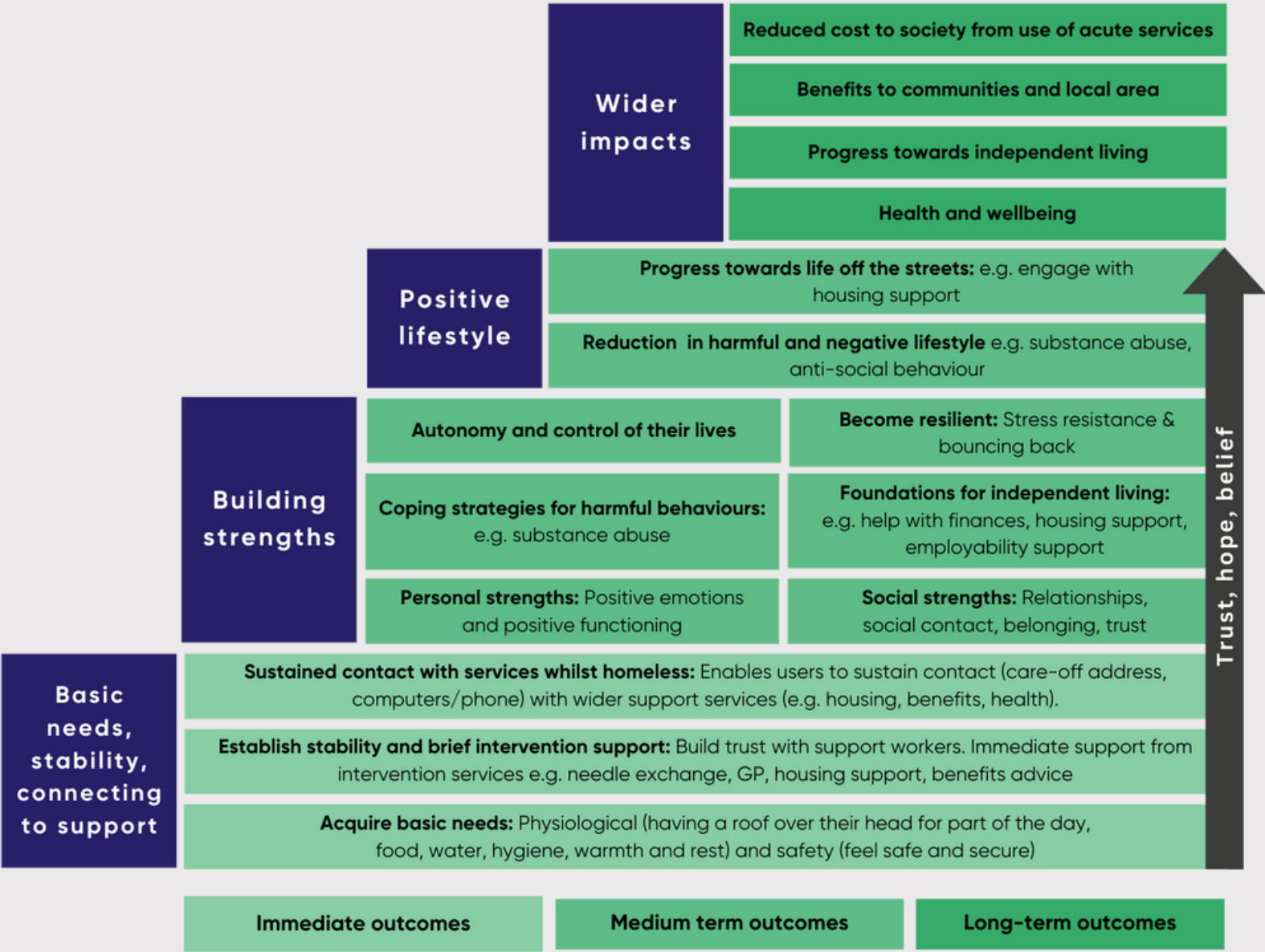
With a growing demand for services that put the needs of people experiencing the greatest inequalities front and centre, Tyne commissioned a second independent evaluation in 2023 to learn from, and act upon, the results. The evaluation used data from 2021/22 as this was the most recent data from a full year available at the time.

This independent evaluation was conducted by a specialist social value evaluator. The process started by mapping out the Theory of Change for each service area. This is based on a collaborative process of identifying and mapping out immediate, medium-term and long-term outcomes achieved as a result of the service. Progress against these outcomes was evidenced through surveys with Joseph Cowen service users and other local data. Finally, the value of these outcomes to both individuals and wider society was valued using the Social Return on Investment methodology.

Each Theory of Change developed was unique and bespoke to the service area being assessed, developed in collaboration with staff, centre visitors and the Centre’s healthcare commissioners. For the Joseph Cowen Health Centre, the Theory of Change focused on four main stages:



Joseph Cowen Health Centre's Theory of Change



Basic Needs, Stability, and Connecting to Support

The first stage involves supporting those who visit the Joseph Cowen Health Centre to meet their basic needs. Many of those who come to the Centre are experiencing rough sleeping, so their physiological needs often include having a roof over their head for part of the day, food, water, warmth, rest, and a place to escape away from the streets. Visitors are welcomed into a safe and secure place at the Centre.

The Centre's drop-in service provides a great opportunity for staff to build up a positive relationship with visitors that can lead to the development of trust. This is the key foundation by which staff can provide immediate brief intervention support that encourages visitors to establish stability in their lives and want to seek help via connecting with intervention support services.

For example, injecting drug users are encouraged to access the needle exchange service where they can get access to clean needles and are encouraged to return them once they have been used. This contributes to an overall reduction in the spread of blood-borne viruses, the sharing of injecting needles across the local community, and a reduction in the harm that they can cause. As well as needle exchange, brief intervention support is focused on encouraging visitors with drug/alcohol dependencies to seek support by connecting to drug support services and treatment.

The Joseph Cowen Health Centre also provides visitors with support for other physical and/or mental health related issues by providing services by specialist partners at the Centre, such as our two volunteer GPs, sexual health check-ups and advice, and other wellbeing and health services. Visitors can use the Joseph Cowen Centre address for accessing and sustaining contact with services whilst experiencing homelessness, and can also use the phone or computer to connect with support services – with help from staff if needed.

This enables visitors to access wider support. For example, staff can help visitors access the benefit system so that they receive the financial support to which they are entitled. Visitors are also connected to a GP/Dentist and any other services that can help them overcome specific barriers. If needed, visitors can also be connected to housing services to help access housing or maintain their tenancy.



Basic Needs, Stability, and Connecting to Support



38%

believe the Centre has improved their social contact with other people

One-Third

of visitors reported that the Centre improves their safety during the day

42%

of visitors have improved their ability to keep themselves and their clothes clean



96%

of visitors have confidence and trust in the Joseph Cowen staff

55%

of Joseph Cowen visitors have been able to stay in touch with services through communication support (eg: Phone/Computer access, Care-Of Address)



7,543

During 2021/22, the Joseph Cowen Health Centre was visited 7,543 times by 577 individual visitors*



77%

of Joseph Cowen visitors couldn't easily access shower or laundry services elsewhere



69%

of Joseph Cowen visitors say that the Centre helps them have enough food to eat, with 78% claiming that they wouldn't easily be able to access refreshments elsewhere



* Within the last year, demand for services has been growing - with 824 visitors making 10664 visits to the Health Centre during 2022/23



Building Strengths

As time progresses, and through their connection to the Health Centre, visitors may begin to further develop social and personal strengths in feelings of trust, hope that their life could be different, and a belief that a better life is possible. This in turn encourages and enables visitors to build strengths that are important steps to moving on positively in their lives.

Although visitors may start to take on more control, they are still potentially affected negatively by incidents that come in from 'left field'. The relationships, trust and support from the Joseph Cowen Health Centre staff and service support partners, as well as the building of strengths, lays the foundation for visitors to become more resilient, resisting stresses when they occur or being better at bouncing back if they are knocked off course.

"I think they're fantastic – friendly, fair and 100% trustworthy. They seem to enjoy helping people."

– Joseph Cowen Visitor

Building Strengths

89%



of visitors feel the Joseph Cowen Health Centre helps them have a better quality of life

The Needle Exchange/Harm Reduction service is one of the most used services at the Centre



81%

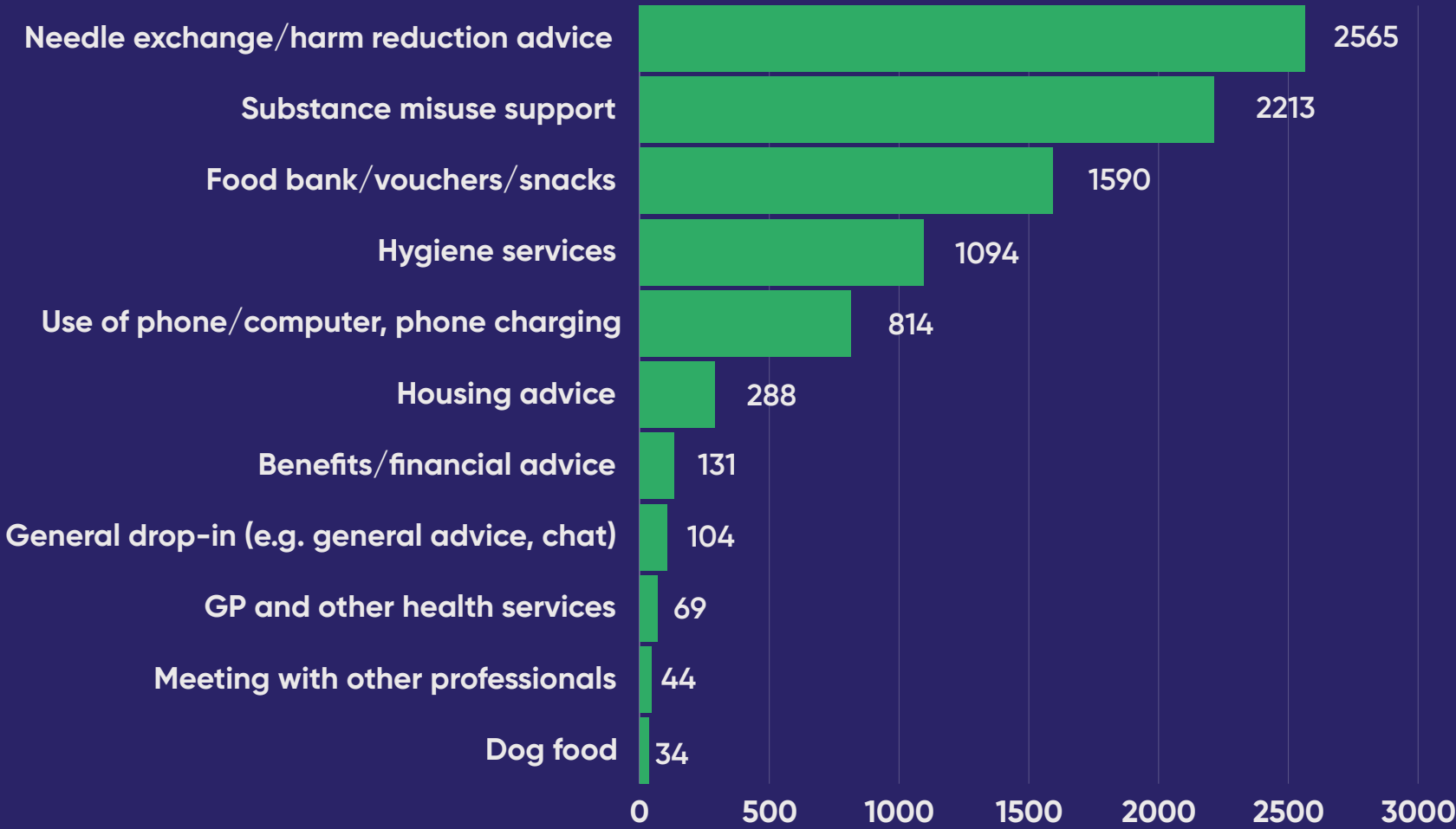
of visitors feel the Joseph Cowen Health Centre has prevented their health from getting worse, for almost 3/4 of respondents, it has helped improve their health

75%



For those of whom it's relevant, 75% stated that help from staff at the Joseph Cowen Health Centre has helped them stay in their home

Services Accessed at the Joseph Cowen Health Centre



Services accessed by 577 individual visitors during 2021-22

Positive Lifestyle

By taking more control, building resilience, and developing other key strengths, visitors are empowered to reduce harmful and negative lifestyle behaviours and begin to build more positive lifestyle choices. For someone experiencing homelessness, this could be making progress towards a life off the streets – connecting to the Joseph Cowen Health Centre can be the first step on the pathway to having a home and independence. Staff help visitors connect to Newcastle City Council's Housing Advice Centre, which in turn can result in them being accepted into the most suitable housing option whether crisis accommodation, supported housing, or other suitable housing options.

As a result of the support and connection to healthcare services at the Joseph Cowen Health Centre, this is the stage where visitors may experience an improvement in their health and wellbeing. Supporting visitors to be more stable and reduce harmful behaviours can also have a positive knock-on effect on the local community, such as reducing crime, Anti-Social Behaviour, and drug-related activities and exposure to drug-related equipment.

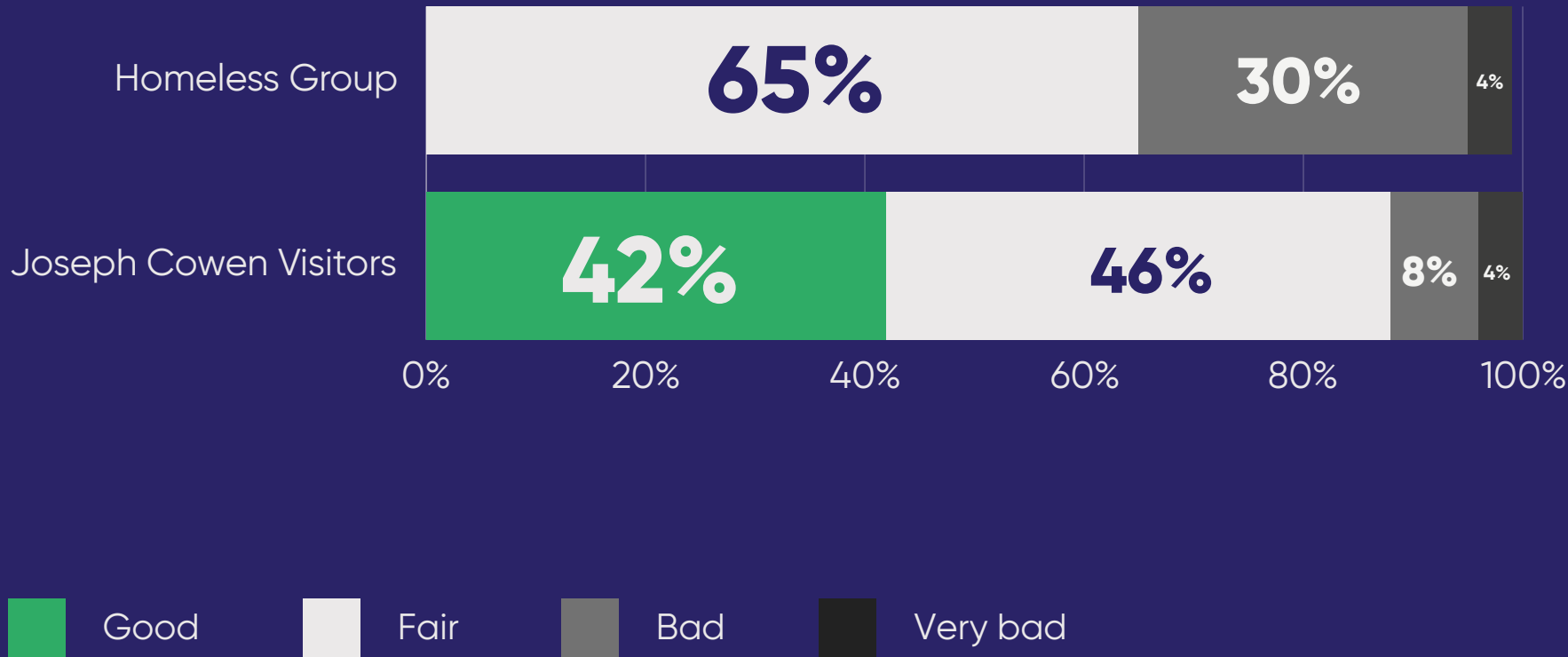
**"Somewhere safe to use for
needle exchange, readily
accessible."**

– Joseph Cowen Visitor



Positive Lifestyle

General Health Status



General health status of Joseph Cowen Health Centre users, compared to a homeless comparison group*

* Homeless Comparison Group – survey responses from a group of local people about their health status when they were recently homeless

2565

visits to the Joseph Cowen Centre were made for **needle exchange/harm reduction** advice in 21/22, where **2213 substance misuse** support interventions were provided

Two-Thirds of people who use the **Needle Exchange/Harm Reduction** service say it reduces the amount of harm they experience from drug/alcohol

Two-Thirds of people who use the **Needle Exchange/Harm Reduction** service claim they wouldn't easily be able to find a similar service elsewhere

One-Quarter of those who use the **harm reduction/needle exchange service** at the Joseph Cowen Centre have **reduced the frequency** of their drug/alcohol use



67%

of those in need of housing stated that Joseph Cowen staff have helped them with **finding somewhere to live**

Wider Impacts

By providing access to positive, preventative healthcare at the Joseph Cowen Health Centre, there are wider impacts. This may be reflected in a reduced cost to society from a reduction in the use of acute public services and harmful effects on communities, and value created by a visitor's progression towards independent living and the achievement of better health and wellbeing.

Benefits to the local community include:

- Reduced contact with police compared to the homeless group
- Reduced overall contact with healthcare services compared to homeless group
- Local spending with staff and suppliers supports the local economy



Wider Impacts

77%

of Joseph Cowen visitors feel that their physical health has improved since visiting the Centre

73%

of Joseph Cowen visitors feel that their mental health has improved since visiting the Centre



13%

of Joseph Cowen visitors had recent contact with police within the last three months, compared to 26% of a local homeless group

Every £1 that comes into the organisation generates an additional 71p for the local economy



Every £1 invested in the Joseph Cowen Health Centre results in £13.04 in social value

Public Service Use and Costs

Public service area	Single homeless person average*	Joseph Cowen Health Centre visitor average
Health		
NHS – Preventative**	£749	£1,090
NHS – Emergency	£2,637	£1,130
Mental Health	£2,483	£360
Drug and Alcohol Support	£1,299	£1,296
Social Care	N/A	£32
Health Subtotal	£7,168	£3,907

The savings to the public sector were calculated by comparing the estimated annual cost per person of health service use amongst Joseph Cowen Health Centre visitors (based on surveys of service use in recent months), with results from a national survey of single homeless people.

* Homeless comparison group taken from 2016 research carried out by Crisis with 86 people experiencing homelessness.

** NHS – preventative’ includes GP visits, hospital outpatient appointments, and elective day case/admissions

Wider Impacts

Working in Partnership (Collaborative Newcastle)

Previous national evidence shows that people experiencing homelessness tend to have higher contact/use of public services (including NHS Services and contact with the criminal justice system) than those who are housed. As part of this report, Tyne worked closely with Collaborative Newcastle through its 'Duplication to Personalisation' workstream to access live NHS records for visitors to the Centre - tracking their use of services across the system.

Collaborative Newcastle is an innovative new partnership which aims to transform the health, wealth and wellbeing of everyone in Newcastle. The city's anchor institutions are working closely with each other and with local people to combine their efforts, expertise and resources in new and creative ways. By working together in this way, their aim is to reduce inequality and provide better opportunities for all. Analysis of healthcare service use over the last two years for a small group of people supported by Tyne indicates that:

- **People supported by Tyne use community-based mental health and drug and alcohol services to support their recovery journey, and over the longer term have less use of these services.**

Those who are supported by Tyne in either emergency homeless accommodation, at the Joseph Cowen Health Centre, or as they first move into supported housing are using more community-based mental health and drug and alcohol support services. People who have been at Tyne for over two years use less of these services, potentially indicating a reduced need for this support over the longer term.

- **Long-term support provided by Tyne may reduce the cost burden on acute, emergency healthcare, and increase planned healthcare.**

People who have lived in Tyne's supported housing for over two years have less contacts with emergency health services than those who are homeless. Longer-term supported housing residents instead use more planned (elective) health care than those who are homeless. Contact with the Joseph Cowen Health Centre can play a vital role in helping those experiencing homelessness access supported housing.



Wider Impacts

Working in Partnership (Newcastle University)

Between June and September 2023, Tyne worked closely with Newcastle University with the goal of learning more about the operational side of the Joseph Cowen Health Centre's service delivery.

Newcastle University researchers spoke with 14 service providers, including those in paid or voluntary positions, who delivered services at the Joseph Cowen Health Centre. These providers represented a variety of organisations, from statutory services and specialized support to third sector and voluntary organizations.

All discussions were recorded and transcribed for analysis, followed by an inductive reflective thematic review. Below are a few key findings:

- Overall providers were positive of how the Joseph Cowen Health Centre delivered support for people experiencing homelessness.
- The Health Centre is easily accessible and located where there was high need both in terms of deprivation and drug use/homelessness
- The environment feels relaxed and non-imposing. Tyne Housing is not a statutory health service, reducing the intimidating preconception that statutory services can invoke in those experiencing homelessness.
- One of the biggest strengths of the Health Centre was that it brought services together from a range of health and social care providers in one place. Acting as a central hub, the Health Centre reduced access barriers, such as travelling across the city for appointments at different locations, faced by people experiencing homelessness.
- The co-location also often led to informal connections and new relationships built across services. This was viewed positively for provider relationships and their ability to support clients.

"The Centre operates on a walk-in basis, so if they (Joseph Cowen Health Centre Visitors) want to come in, we'll see them straightaway rather than having to book an appointment. The people we see are often disorganised so it's good to be there for them."

- Service Provider at the Joseph Cowen Health Centre

How we Deliver Services – Summed up

We have had an independent evaluation led by researcher Emma Adams (NIHR Doctoral Fellow) at Newcastle University "Exploring what works well and less well in a community-based drop-in delivery model providing health and wellbeing services for people experiencing homelessness." This project was funded by the Newcastle University Faculty of Medical Sciences Research Excellence Development Award Scheme (REDA) and led to a visual representation of the findings.



Callum's Story

When Callum first arrived at the Joseph Cowen Health Centre, he had been experiencing homelessness and had spent 18 months sleeping rough. During the initial one-to-one meeting, he was very guarded and reluctant to share information about his situation. It was clear that he was vulnerable on the streets and had been suffering from serious mental health problems.

For the next five months, Callum attended the Centre daily where he was provided with regular refreshments, food, and clothing donations. Staff carried out daily welfare checks, and Callum was able to access the shower and toilet facilities as well as a washing machine to keep his clothes clean.

It took time to build trust with Callum but he eventually shared his story. Callum had suffered physical abuse as a child at the hands of his violent father, which when looking back is where he believes his mental health problems started. He left home at a young age and spent some time sofa-surfing with friends before getting into a council flat and employment as a Sous Chef. Callum was a well-respected chef working at a number of restaurants over the years, but the long working hours and influence of others led him to take drugs and drink heavily.

His addiction began to spiral before he ended up losing his job, his flat, and ended up living on the streets. In his words: 'I used whatever drugs going on the streets to block everything out and just forget!'. Whilst on the streets, Callum ended up offending - mostly assaults to protect himself and petty theft to feed his addiction.

Whilst on the street, Callum suffered through many traumatic experiences including beatings, being stalked, and having to endure the coldest nights in a flooded tent. Throughout his time on the streets, he was off his medication for long periods of time and had begun to contemplate suicide.

Staff were able to support Callum to engage with all the support services he needed, building a multi-disciplinary and integrated service approach to bring together housing support, healthcare from his GP, pharmacy, mental health support and police. Callum used the Joseph Cowen Health Centre as a base for meeting with professionals and his Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) weekly.

However, one day Callum told Joseph Cowen staff that he was going to commit suicide that night. Staff alerted his CPN and the police. Callum was admitted to hospital that afternoon where his mental health was fully assessed and he was prescribed suitable medication. Callum says this was a turning point for him, and after this he actively sought rehousing and engaged with mental health services.

He continued to receive daily support from the Joseph Cowen Health Centre until he received the keys to his new flat. He came into the Centre proud as punch the same morning to tell the staff all about it. Staff went the extra mile and sourced furniture and soft furnishings from friends and staff to help him furnish his new flat.

Callum visited the Joseph Cowen Health Centre staff the week before Christmas to give them a Peace Lily as a thank you gift. He became quite emotional and told staff, 'I would not be alive if it hadn't been for your kindness. Thank you for being patient with me and pushing me to get help. I will always be eternally grateful.' His CPN later said, 'I simply do not think Callum would be with us now without the support and care provided by the Joseph Cowen Health Centre'.

Learning

This evaluation of the Joseph Cowen Health Centre involved consulting with beneficiaries, people from the homeless-community not using the service, colocated organisations and local stakeholders (including other homelessness support providers) to understand the Centre's place in the local landscape and unmet gaps.

This was underpinned with an exercise mapping other local provisions, including a 'mystery shopper' exercise led by people with lived experience. This provided rich information, which, alongside the Centre's social impact evaluation and an independent academic evaluation of the service delivery model, led by Newcastle University, is being used to identify areas for development. The key findings from this report are;

- Demand for Tyne's wellbeing offer is increasing year-on-year, and the provision of alternatives seems to be declining. Ensuring our wellbeing offer is available to more of our residents is a strategic goal.
- Measuring the use of health services is not sufficient to describe the impact of organisations like Tyne, but seeing the greater use of planned and preventative healthcare, as opposed to emergency admissions, is bringing new insights into Tyne's work and should be communicated to colleagues in health care commissioning.
- People who attend the Joseph Cowen Health Centre strongly feel that the services and support they receive helps prevent their health from getting worse, helps improve their health and mental wellbeing, and helps improve their overall quality of life. Joseph Cowen Health Centre users include both homeless and housed people, and those who attend the Centre tend to have higher scores for mental wellbeing, resilience, and overall life satisfaction than those who are homeless (in emergency accommodation).
- There is not only a reduction in overall healthcare costs for people who use the Joseph Cowen Health Centre, but there is a shift away from emergency healthcare use and towards preventative healthcare.



Going Forward

The publication of our Social Value report has not only enabled us to celebrate the difference we've already made, but it has helped us to reflect on the change we hope to see next, and put the foundations in place in order to make that change happen:

- We have successfully piloted weekend openings, coordinating with People's Kitchen and other services to avoid overlap - we are now looking at making this an ongoing provision.
- We have established a new partnership with Thornfield Medical Group, leading to a new health clinic being run at the Centre every Friday morning by a Nurse Practitioner.
- We are working with our partners to create firmer colocation arrangements and maximise the impact of the value of this delivery model. We are actively working to grow and develop our partnerships with others to enhance the offer at Joseph Cowen Health Centre in response to gaps in provision identified through the service review.
- We will consult with those who know the service best, our visitors, to continue developing our offer.



Thanks & Acknowledgements

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Newcastle City Council

Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust

Street Zero

Sir James Knott Trust

North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board

University of Northumbria

Newcastle University

Northumbria Police

Home Office

Masonic Charitable Foundation

Barbour

Collaborative Newcastle

Neighbourly

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