



2024

ANNUAL REPORT

**IMPROVING LIVES,
PROMOTING HEALTH**



Charity Number - 1074508

Company Limited by Guarantee - 3614799

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Chairperson's Introduction



I am pleased to report that this year has been a great year for the Feelgood with a variety of new projects and activities.

The commitment of the staff and managers as normal goes far and beyond so thank you all.

One has to recognise the hard work of our volunteers without whom the Feelgood would struggle to exist, so to you all thank you for your time and effort over the last 12 months.

I would also like to thank all our partner organisations and all our funders.

When I look down the list of projects and activities we have all been part of this past 12 months I am so proud to say we will continue to support our community through the Feelgood.

Again thank you all.

Bill Penney

Chairman

Children and Families



Breastfeeding Support Sefton, which is funded through a contract with MerseyCare, provides support for mothers who choose to breastfeed. The service also promotes the benefits of breastfeeding throughout Sefton.

The service provides support mainly through its four groups run in the Feelgood Factory, May Logan, Southport and Formby and through its Facebook page. Where necessary, face-to-face individual support is also provided. A recent addition is a WhatsApp group. The popularity of the online support can be seen through the membership, with 1,800 members on Facebook and 200 members on WhatsApp.

A survey undertaken at the end of the year found that mothers expressed gratitude for the supportive environment within our groups and the WhatsApp platform, which helped with feelings of isolation in their breastfeeding journey and bolstered their confidence. They praised the professionalism and assistance provided by the breastfeeding support workers, particularly in tackling latching issues. They also appreciated the early and vital support received, feeling understood and validated in their concerns.

Personalised guidance and practical tips empowered them to persevere with breastfeeding despite challenges.

The service has two paid members of staff, the Co-ordinator, Carol Miles, and her assistant, Kirsty McCormick. It relies heavily on the dedicated work of its volunteers who all complete accredited training provided by the Feelgood Factory through Open Awards in addition to extra training provided by other partners and organisations. At the end of the year there were 42 volunteers. Their dedication to supporting families through the breastfeeding journey



Facts and Figures

Group Attendances	1251
One-to-One Support	70
Number of Support Groups	4
Number of Facebook Posts/PMs	1289
Telephone Support	342

“Looking through some pictures this morning and I could honestly cry at the improvement [my child] has made after a rough start. Just wanted to post something positive and say how much the advice and support I've got in the group has helped.”

“The sessions at Feelgood are great, it is so nice to be able to feed and chat in a safe space and know that advice is on hand if required.”

“Going to group helped me find friendship that I didn't think I would. It gave me a space to share my concerns without judgement.”

really adds to the value of the overall service as they can speak to women as very knowledgeable peers. Again, the survey highlighted that the advice provided by breastfeeding mothers highlighted the vital role of breastfeeding services and social support networks in developing a successful breastfeeding journeys. Bringing together local mother helped build confidence and create a supportive environment where individuals can share experiences and offer shared encouragement.. As one member commented: “It takes a village to raise a child....Carol, Kirsty and other mums are your village.” A significant number of the mothers who receive support themselves do go on to train as volunteers. This journey has been described by one group member.

“I have always found you to be incredibly supportive, ever since I first got in touch nearly 3 years ago. The Facebook page is fantastic for support; questions are answered quickly, which is great. When I first started receiving support it was at the end of lockdown, things were still restrictive so the online base was absolutely necessary and honestly a lifesaver. If I had not had the support available to me I know my breastfeeding journey would have been short-lived. To have made it to 2.5 years with my eldest is an amazing achievement ... The WhatsApp group in particular is a wonderful source of both support and friendship. I've been able to utilise the group support this time round, and it's brilliant. I thoroughly enjoy attending the groups and everyone is so lovely, friendly and supportive. I look forward to training up so as I can go on to support future Mums.”

Contact



Phone

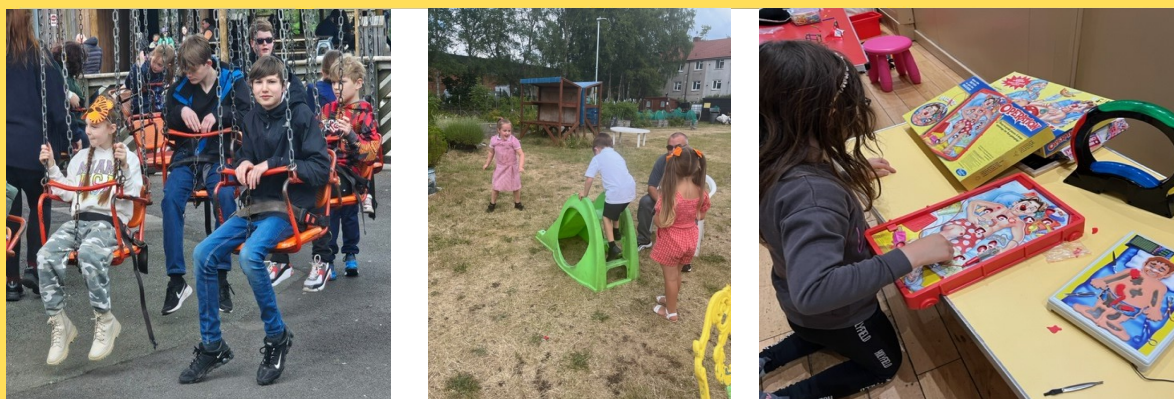
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Children and Families



As a result of the experiences of the breastfeeding service during the pandemic, we also now run, in conjunction with PANDAS Sefton, a **Perinatal Mental Health Support Group** to support families where parents are experiencing stress and depression. This weekly group has gone on from strength to strength during the year.

We have also continued to develop our work with older children and their parents, in particular focussing on helping families struggling with neurodivergency.

The **Monday Club** is an after-school club, primarily with children on the Autism spectrum aged between 8 and 12. The club provides a range of activities for the young people, including session in the community garden when the weather allows. The group also provides support for the parents of the children and a WhatsApp group has been set up to facilitate further this work.

During the year the Feelgood Factory became a Liverpool Football Club Foundation Wellbeing Hub which has opened up a lot of new opportunities for the children, such as trips to other hubs, an LFC charity match, other events at Anfield and trips to two other community events. One member of the club has been selected to attend a training day at the LFC Official Academy.

Connected to this staff have run holiday activities in the summer holidays and in half terms including activities such as cooking, games, sports and crafts.



Facts and Figures

Membership of Parents' Group	11
Membership of Monday Club	15
Families attached to PANDAS Group	59
Families receiving essential food hampers	30
Families receiving Christmas dinner hampers	60
Families receiving Christmas gifts	28

"This group has saved me. The sheer loneliness, helplessness and feeling a failure every single day trying to help [my child] has driven me to the point of not wanting to be here any more. Speaking with others who are struggling with the same/similar has helped my mental health enormously."

"... [it] gives me a weekly purpose to be in a group who have the same struggles with our children and the fight to keep moving forward."

"Group is helping me as I can see a light at the end of the tunnel, not failing as a parent, its helping me build as a person, plus as a mum."

The **Parents' Support Group** provides a weekly meeting open to parents, largely those who themselves have autism or who are parenting children on the autism spectrum. The group did bring in regular speakers but the members have now asked to reduce this to once a month as they prefer the social and support aspect.

On a one-to-one basis families are also helped, both financially and emotionally, through the **Community Hub**. During the year practical help has been given to over 100 families in addition to advice and support

One woman who was helped came originally to the Parents' Group but this was too much for her so she received one-to-one support instead. She herself had ADHD and was a single parent with five children, three of whom were on the autism spectrum. Staff discussed the support available both to help her financially and also to address the issues she was having with one of her children. Over a few sessions several referrals were made and practical assistance given.

Several months later she presents as a new woman. Her mental health has improved and she has made the decision to home-educate the daughter who was struggling at school.

The added advantage for the families is that they can always come back if they need us. The centre is a place they feel comfortable and know they will receive a warm welcome.

Contact



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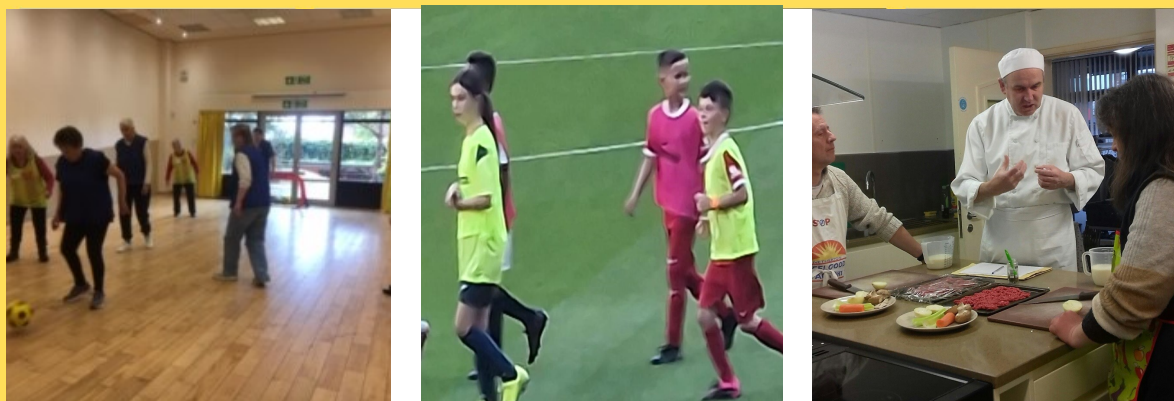
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Promoting Good Health



As a healthy living centre the Feelgood Factory has always had the promotion of good health, both physical and mental, at the centre of what we do.

As ever we have continued to run a series of **exercise classes**, that combine physical activity with meeting other people. Many of the groups meet up after their classes in the community lounge for a chat and often a cup of tea and coffee.

Thanks to funding from Sport England we were also able to run a programme aimed at men who were disengaged from physical activity called **Man Cave Sport**. The men took part in a series of physical activities. Numbers were small but commitment was very impressive. This was in addition to the normal **Walking Football** session every Friday which has continued to be a popular fixture in our programme.

In order to help people improve their cookery skills and nutritional knowledge **healthy eating** courses have been run. Those who participate in the groups take home the food they have prepared with the aim of encouraging all the family to experience nutritionally rich foods. Engagement was good over all the courses and individuals demonstrated new found enjoyment cooking and eating. The **Food Matters** course was also run to help participants to lose weight and learn how to cook healthy meals.

This year, in partnership with the breastfeeding service, Malcolm ran a weaning programme (**Starting Solids**) to help parents learn about nutrition for babies and growing toddlers. The objective of this programme was to lead the parents to develop the confidence to cook for their babies and not rely on



Facts and Figures

Healthy Cooking attendances	83
Walking attendances	575
Line Dancing attendances	503
Yoga attendances	914
Aerobics attendances	305
Pilates attendances	277
Zumba attendances	500
Other exercise attendances	75

"Thank you for offering this confidence course to women. I appreciate all the time you took to guide us on a path to being more assertive....

Thank you for shining a light.

A beacon of hope"

"Bought a new knife and pans, genuinely can't wait to get in the kitchen at home and attempt new healthy dishes. Thank you so much..."

"Best money I've ever spent. Can't say enough about my experience at cooking class..."

manufactured foods. They also came to understand how they can save money by cooking from scratch.

All of this work is underpinned by the work of the Health Mentors through the **Living Well Sefton** programme who work with individuals to help them identify their health and wellbeing goals and support them to achieve them.

Most people who attend our health promotion groups are linked to LWS and receive individual advice and guidance that often leads them to other programmes. For instance Ryan is a 33 year old living with quite severe mental health problems. He reluctantly came to Feelgood Factory with his support worker and started a four-week cooking class as part of the Assisted Living Programme. From the start, he was very engaged and followed the instructions given. He was inquisitive, constantly asking questions and appeared to enjoy the finished dishes. At the end, he asked if he could come along to another course as "... I've really, really enjoyed myself and I want to learn new recipes and ideas...". Ryan is also considering attending Walking Football and Man Cave which may be of benefit to him socially and improve his physical fitness levels.

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Promoting Good Health



The Feelgood Factory accepts that there is no health without mental health and so we place great emphasis on developing programmes that will help local people cope with the stresses and strains of everyday life.

One of the emotional issues that confronts us all during our lives is that of **bereavement**. The Feelgood identified many years ago a need to provide support fairly early on after a death or loss. We do not provide counselling but attempt to provide help while the feelings are still very raw, hopefully thereby preventing the need for counselling later on. We provide support one-to-one and also through groups where participants can benefit from the support of others going through the same, or a similar, things. A good number of people come to the Feelgood because it is face-to-face whereas other support is often by way of the telephone or literature. It is also a way of getting out the house which can feel empty—“It is going into a house that no longer breathes, a house that is dead” as one participant put it.

Staff have undertaken training with Cruse Bereavement Care during the year and are looking at ways of extending the bereavement provision to include different types of loss.

We have also continued to run the **Think Differently, Cope Differently** programme which helps participants to cope with stress and depression using the Five Ways to Wellbeing techniques.

Jennie, the Mental Health Mentor, has also introduced two new programmes, **Confidence for Women** and **Building Relationships**. The Confidence Course is a six-week programme which shows participants how to be assertive



Facts and Figures

Drop-In attendances	493
Walking Football Attendances	514

"I didn't realise how low I felt and how bad I feel about myself, believing that it must be me, it must be all my fault, with you chatting about things and explaining things it is slowly helping me and I hope one day I will finally see the sunshine again through the dark clouds."

"I have recently attended the Confidence Course ran by Jennie. Jennie was very understanding, professional and mindful of everyone's needs and triggers. I thoroughly enjoyed attending the course and feel I benefited from it."

"I had a lovely time at Jennies confidence group met some lovely people learnt a lot about my self thanks for all the support ."

and deal with conflict. It also helps them to analyse when their lack of confidence started and what precipitated the issues.

The relationships programme ran as a pilot and has now become a proper programme. This looks at what is a healthy relationship and what isn't; it is about building awareness of cycles that can be harmful.

Alongside the group work, it is possible for individuals to see mentors on a one-to-one basis for a limited period of times to work through issues and develop a plan going forward. This is not counselling but mentoring, coming alongside the person and supporting them to make healthy decisions.

The Feelgood Factory also manages the **Drop-In** which provides support for people with more enduring or complex difficulties. The Drop-In is run in the Feelgood Factory every Tuesday and in Linacre Mission every Friday. This is a safe and non-judgemental space for people to pop in, talk and enjoy company but also obtain advice and practical help if necessary.

This year, Malcolm has started providing a healthy lunch for the drop-in when he is available.

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Improving Quality of Life



As well as promoting health, the Feelgood's objective is to improve the quality of life of local people. One of the main ways in which we do this is by running groups to allow people to meet with one another, thus combatting isolation. We have long acknowledged that, whereas some people enjoy social groups, others find this difficult and prefer settings that are centred around shared interests. Not only do the latter provide ready-made topics of conversation, they also enrich lives and improve mental health through learning.

Social Groups

The **Good Afternoon Social** was a social programme aimed at providing a menu of interesting activities alongside support and social interaction. During the year the group enjoyed a Coronation tea, a Soapy afternoon (watching old episodes of Soaps) and a fish and chips social among many others. They also went on outings to Cheshire Oaks, Southport and the Black Country Living Museum. At the end of the year GAS ended and has now been split into two, Tea and Talk and a bingo afternoon.

The **Ladies Friendship Group** is, as the name implies, a group for women. They did meet once a fortnight but have now chosen to meet weekly. In the group the ladies talk together and enjoy refreshments. Outside of the group they organise their own outings and keep in touch through WhatsApp.

Man Cave is a group for men that is held on a Friday afternoon. The men engage in darts, games and quizzes and also have sessions in the community garden when the weather allows.



Facts and Figures

Craft Group attendances	114
History Group attendances	208
Ladies' Group attendances	126
Good Afternoon Social attendances	514
Music Group attendances	377
Man Cave attendances	271
Drawing Group attendances	166
Book Club attendances	40

"I would recommend the history group 100%. Sandra and Howard bring the past to life and always try to include local history in their topics .

The ladies group I have been a few times but alas it's the same time as my History , lovely group of women run by Carol - chat, laugh , cry always some one to talk to and there's always cake

The book club is also interesting a small intimate group of women run by Ann we discuss the book it's interesting to see what our opinions are so can be rather lively. And a cuppa."

Interest Groups

The menu of interest groups is an ever-growing one with sessions run by staff and volunteers such as Helen Martin, Howard Parker and Will Taylor.

The **History Group** (Feelgood Learning) is the most long-standing of the groups, going back now more than twenty years. Three times a year, the group choose two or three topics that we then look at for the next few months. Although these may include elements of local history, they are much wider than that.

Creative Writing is another weekly group that looks at how to write stories, poems, drama etc. During the year the group compiled its first anthology of work.

The **Book Club** members work their ways through selected books and then come together to discuss them.

The **Music Group** is one of our larger groups which comprises both musicians and singers. They come together to make music for pleasure but are now also performing very successfully at various events and functions.

There were three groups engaged in arts and crafts, the **Craft Group**, the **Drawing Group** and **Knitting for Good**—the latter produces goods to support good causes.

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Improving Quality of Life



The Feelgood Factory has also continued to provide practical help in the community. The **Shopping Service** provides a volunteer-led weekly service for older and vulnerable people. Customers are rung every week for their shopping list. The orders are put together and then delivered by volunteers every Thursday. This service doesn't just provide food, but also human interaction. Many of our customers say how much they value the phone call each week and also the visit by the volunteers who will also put away the goods and check their client is all right. All customers are also visited by a Health Mentor who will check whether or not shopping is the only thing they need.

The Shopping Service is not just restricted to older people. One current client is in his fifties but has very limited eyesight. He lives in a flat several floors up and normal supermarket shopping services won't deliver to him because of this. He has no family and is very isolated, his only companion being his cat. This customer benefits not only from a service that will deliver to him but from the human interaction the service affords.

Mow and Grow is our gardening service that provides reliable help for people unable to look after their own gardens. During the year Mow and Grow was incorporated into the community garden, with the longer-term aspiration of it becoming a service to help local people learn how to use their gardens to support the environment.

The **Community Hub** has continued to develop through the year with the support of local businesses such as Dunelm, Asda and Tesco's as well as the



Facts and Figures

Shops undertaken for vulnerable people	932
Gardens maintained	292
Number of frozen meals distributed to people in need	5000

"I would like to say thank you to the Feelgood Factory and its members of staff for always giving 100% in the community whether it be a quick chat to days out to groups put on like breastfeeding, confidence course, SEN groups, financial chats and many more, this benefit us all in the Netherton community."

"What a fab idea to have such a lovely sitting area [the Community Lounge]. Staff are very friendly and spot on with advice they give you. Thank you to all the staff."

"A wonderful experience is felt in the living room. You are made to feel relaxed among friends you make here."

LFC Foundation and Cash for Kids. The aim of the hub is to provide somewhere that people can come if they need practical assistance or emotional support. We have been undertaking a lot of work to develop administrative procedures to improve the efficiency of this work. In particular the hub has been central in the distribution of frozen meals to local people every week and also of meals and presents at Christmas.

The **Community Lounge** has also been developed through the year. This is a drop-in living room at the front of the building that is open for all people during our operational hours. The space provides comfortable seating and a space to play games. We have now linked in with the international living room movement, Camerados, which provides equipment and ideas for development.

An allied and very important development was the obtaining of a grant to improve our **community computers**. The computers we had were about fifteen years old and were just about "giving up the ghost". With the money obtained we were not only able to replace the community computers downstairs which form part of the Community Lounge, but also to set up a computer suite upstairs which is being used both for group work and by individuals.

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Helping the Environment



The Netherton Community Garden is being funded by the National Lottery to aid its development to become a Green Hub for the local area. Community events were badly hit during the year by the weather; we have now purchased a marquee to help in the future.

We did, however, have engagement from eco-groups from two local schools, Netherton Moss (13 members) and St Oswalds (30 members). They were engaged in a range of gardening tasks and also spotting insects and other wildlife. They were given plant pots and plants to grow for themselves.

A local group, Autism Initiatives, took over some growing beds themselves and bought a polytunnel. A group of members come weekly to the garden and grow vegetables and flowers. They also use the garden for their own social events as the organisation has three bases and the garden forms a good place to meet together for barbeques and such like.

The Feelgood Factory's own After-School Group have used the garden regularly. Most of the members are neuro-diverse and, in good weather, the garden acts as an outside classroom for them to play games and learn about growing and wildlife in the garden. The garden was also used for diversionary activities for local young people during the bonfire/Hallowe'en period.

Two groups from the Princes' Trust have also spent a couple of weeks in the garden undertaking projects for their awards.

In late spring Netherton's first scarecrow competition was held. Despite its novelty there were nine entries with designs ranging for Worzel Gummidge to



Facts and Figures

Number of regular volunteers	10
Attendances at Woodwork Course	22
Attendances at Rubbish Art	53

“The class have really enjoyed seeing the process of the fruit and vegetables growing.

The children would love to make their own garden where fruit and vegetables can be eaten at snack time.

We felt everything was at the children’s level and very engaging. So much learning came from it.”

“Every time I come to volunteer --- I feel happy because the Feelgood Factory team are all so welcoming. I always enjoy myself.”

“I think it builds up your immune system”. I think it is particularly good for children who are separated from the world that we played in these days.”

Mrs Pankhurst.

The idea is, as time goes on, to run courses and programmes that will develop practical skills. During the year a second cabin and a shed were installed so we now have space to run groups under cover.

The following courses were run during the year:

- Woodwork – this showed people how to use recycled wood to make new items of use.
- Rubbish Art – this programme used waste materials as craft resources.
- Garden to Table – this programme was run with members of the Feelgood Factory staff and showed people how to grow food and then use crops for food.

Our aim going forward is to move the garden onto more of a sustainable footing by selling the produce grown, so there is more thought put into planning sowing and harvesting. A regular supply of in-season vegetables were sold during the year, largely in the Feelgood Factory. A move has been made towards growing and selling plants and, latterly, flowers as these sell really well.

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Staff



Sandra Duncan—Chief Executive

Hayley Beer—Business Manager

Andrea Sanderson—Healthy Living Services Manager (resigned September 2023)

Malcolm Bannon—Specialist Food Mentor (appointed Healthy Living Services Manager March 2024)

Carol Miles—Breastfeeding Support Sefton Co-ordinator

Kirsty McCormick—Breastfeeding Support Sefton Assistant

Jennie McGowan—Specialist Mental Health Mentor

Clare Browne—Specialist Community Mentor

Ann Anirah—Health and Wellbeing Mentor

Martin Brecknock—Project Co-ordinator, Netherton Community Garden

Eddie Murphy—Mow and Grow Worker

Toad Stevenson—Community Co-ordinator

Carol Robinson— Business Support Worker

Dawn Brown—Community Support Worker

A huge thanks too, to all of the volunteer members of the Feelgood team who make such a difference week by week!

Fact File

TRUSTEES

Bill Penney (Chair)

Jim Flynn

Les James

George Loughlin

Helen Martin

Ursula Ingham

Linda Glenn (to November 2024)

Cllr Linda Cluskey

Mark Buxton

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