



HEAR4U ANNUAL REPORT, May 2021 – May 2022

INTRODUCTION

What is the Hear4U Listening Team?

Hear4U is a team of volunteer listeners. These are largely, but not uniquely, gathered from faith groups within the two Churches Together teams in Broxbourne. Hear4U takes referrals from a range of agencies, including NHS Social Prescribers, and provides one-to-one listening in a room within a church or similar setting, and where clients benefit from a same-gender listener.

If Hear4U volunteers feel that clients would benefit from further support, they will refer the clients back to the referrer.

Our aims:

- To give time and a listening ear to local people who need help to think through their problems.
- Through active listening, to support people to make their own decisions about taking positive steps forward in their lives.
- To provide a valued resource for our referring partners
- To reduce the burden of anxiety in the local community.
- To reflect Christian faith in action.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Most referrals are received from Social Prescribers via the online referral system Frontline, or in an email, using our referral form. Details supplied include name, address, date of birth, and contact details plus a little information about some of the concerns the client has.

- Upon receipt, the administrator contacts the client introducing the service, explaining that they will be matched with a listener and an appointment made in one of the four designated meeting rooms in Hoddesdon or Waltham Cross
- Clients are matched to listeners according to gender and the listeners' availability and an appointment made at a mutually convenient time and meeting room
- The administrator will contact the client shortly before the date of a meeting to confirm attendance and report back to the listener
- The meeting lasts one hour, with clients receiving up to three appointments. After three appointments a review is made to establish if further appointments are needed
- After a Listener has seen a client, a report is submitted to the Social Prescriber who will check if any further action is required



HOW IS IT RUN?

Steering Group

We have a Steering Group of 6 people, who meet bi-monthly to discuss any issues which need resolving and to plan bi-annual get-togethers for the Listening Team. Five of those on the Steering Group are trained listeners, and the Administrator is also on the Steering Group. All are from Churches Together in Hoddesdon, Broxbourne and Wormley. The members of the Steering Group are:

Diana Forrest (Chair)

Rev Nick Sharp

Dave Lee

Jessie Stewart

John Rumble

Jacqui Gifford (Administrator)

Through the Steering Group, a Volunteer Handbook for Hear4U has been developed, and this is reviewed regularly.

Administrator

We have a paid administrator, who is also the administrator for Hoddesdon Parish Church. She works about an hour a week on Hear4U activities. Churches Together in Hoddesdon, Broxbourne and Wormley has allocated a small budget towards administrative costs.

Finance

Between May 2021 and April 2022, £131.81p was spent

Safeguarding

The Safeguarding officer for Hoddesdon Parish Church is also the named safeguarding officer for Hear4U

THE LISTENERS

Training

We have 14 Listeners (ten women and four men) who have all been trained through three modules of the Acorn Listening Skills training provided by the Acorn Christian Healing Foundation. This training was funded by the Herts Community Foundation (£1600) and by Churches Together in Hoddesdon, Broxbourne and Wormley (£480).

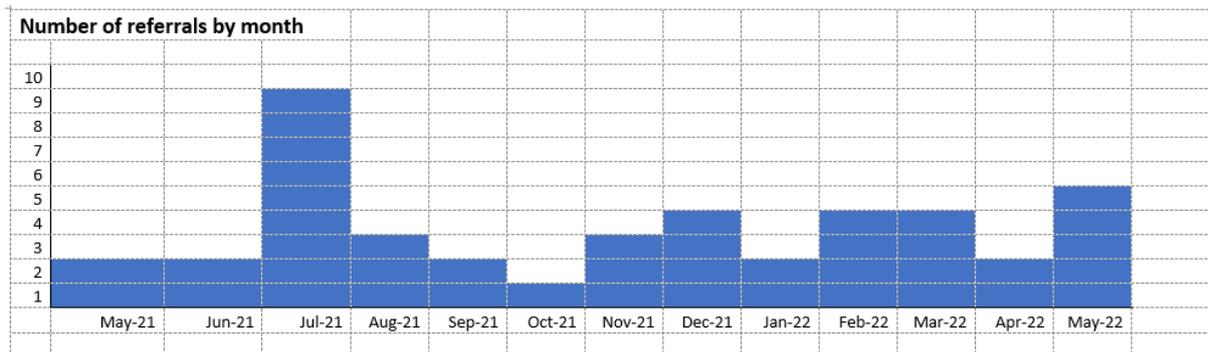
Ongoing support through supervisors

Each listener has a supervisor. The supervisors are members of the clergy from across Broxbourne. Initially there were 5 supervisors, but one of those was a curate, and she has now moved on to a post as a vicar. The listeners are encouraged to have a meeting with their supervisor after they have had a listening session.

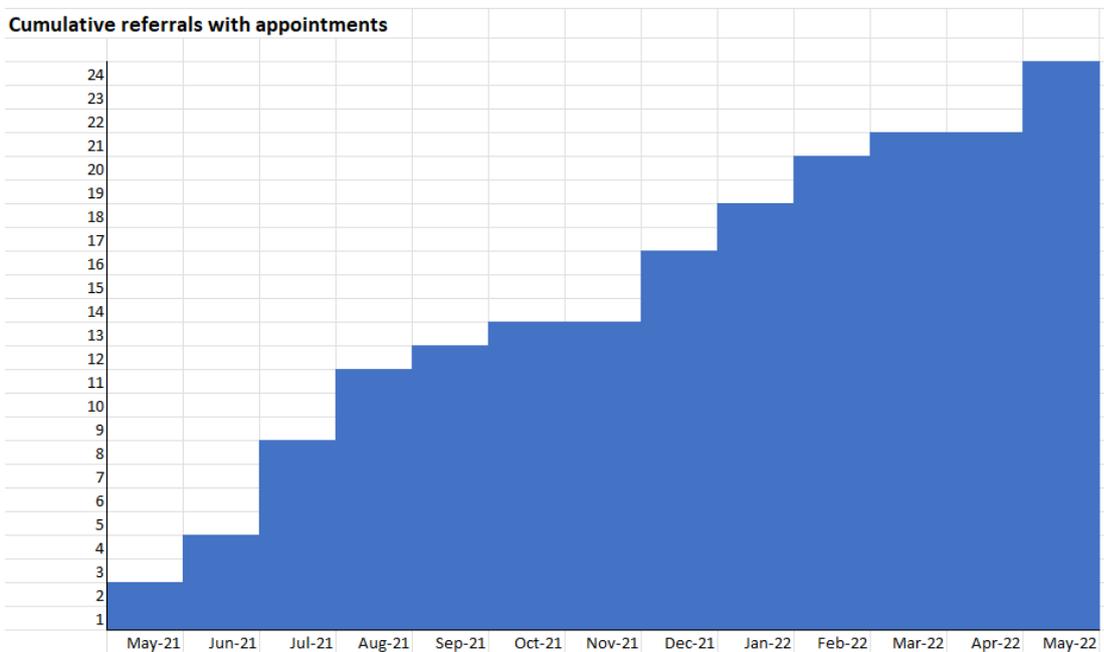
Team evenings

The listeners, supervisors, administrator and safeguarding officer are invited to a team evening twice a year, where there is time to share issues and ideas, and where policies and procedures can be amended and improved.

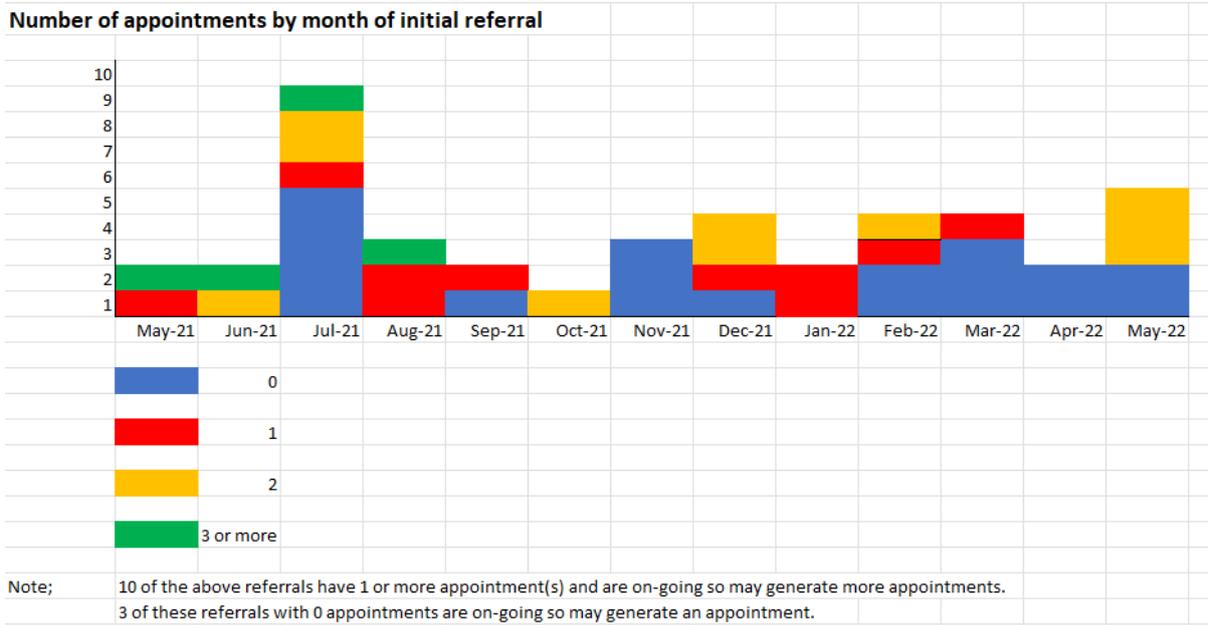
ACTIVITY



From the start of the service until the end of May 2022, there have been 43 referrals, an average of about 3 per month. Not all the referrals have resulted in a listening session. Some referrals were for people living too far away, some clients decided they did not want a session, some were not well enough.



In total, from the beginning of May 2021 until the end of May 2022, 24 people have had at least one listening session. The following graph shows how many listening sessions people have had:



Most people are being referred to Hear4U by the Social Prescribers, who work with general practitioners to connect people with non-medical support, charities or community groups to improve their wellbeing.

The age-groups of the 25 people who have had Listening session with Hear4u between May 2021 and May 2022 were as follows:

Age group	Number
20-29	0
30-39	0
40-49	5
50-59	4
60-69	4
70-79	7
80+	2
Unknown	2
Total	24

16 of those clients were women, and 8 (33%) were men. This matches quite well the ratio of men (28%) to women in the Listening team.



ISSUES

Referrals

The system works well, with just three areas requiring a little more attention.

- Clients who were unable to attend appointments due to Covid 19 or hospital appointments, were offered another appointment.
- There have been 'no shows' and cancellations too, which were followed up with a phone call offering alternative appointments.
- Referrals are mainly being received from the Cheshunt/Waltham Cross area, very few from Hoddesdon, Broxbourne or Wormley.

Capacity

The team has the capacity to take more referrals. We are trying to encourage more referrals from the social prescribers in the north of the Borough.

Safeguarding

We have had two clients who have raised safeguarding issues, which have been dealt with by our safeguarding officer, with advice from the Diocesan safeguarding advisor.

COMMENTS FROM LISTENERS

The following are some comments from listeners:

"The people I have met in the listening sessions have had to face very challenging moments in their lives. They are the sort of moments that anyone could find themselves facing. I can see the value of sharing those events and stories with another person who offers a listening ear in complete confidence. It is a privilege to be there to listen in the safe environment that Hear4U provides."

"It has been a privilege to help out with this project, especially as my client was such an interesting and gracious person. He was really grateful for our two conversations, and I gained a lot from them too."

'I have felt honoured and relieved when my clients begin to feel safe with me to unload their concerns. The outpouring has at times been hard to hear and identifies the benefits of having someone who wants to listen to all issues. Reassuring the client of the confidentiality is paramount. The length of time we can give is probably the longest the clients have had for JUST them. I feel I am getting to be a better listener because I can now handle the silences. If you wait more comes tumbling out'.

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

Four of the trained listeners now run a Hoddesdon Bereavement Support Group, which meets on the second Thursday morning of each month, at Hoddesdon Parish Church.

Below are flyers for the Hear4U Listening Team and the Hear4U Bereavement Support Group:

HEAR4U
BROXBOURNE CHURCHES TOGETHER
LISTENING TEAM

The **Hear4U** Listening Team has been set up in response to the increasing numbers of people who are feeling stressed and anxious as a result of the Covid pandemic, and their need for a listening ear.

Hear4U is a team of volunteers who are trained in Active Listening. Their role is not to give advice, but to listen to people, reflect back what has been said, and help people to come to their own solutions for the way forwards.

We are working in the Borough of Broxbourne and can take adult referrals from front-line workers. We will work one-to-one with clients, usually in a church location, giving sessions for up to an hour. Each client can have up to three sessions. Good communication will be kept with the referrers, and the client would be referred back to them if further needs were identified.

Safeguarding procedures will be in place. All listeners have had a DBS check and references.



IF YOU WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:
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Jacqui Gifford Hear4U Administrator – hear4uhoddesdon@outlook.com



CONTACT

For further information, please contact:

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