



HEAR4U ANNUAL REPORT, May 2022 – April 2023

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 five people, who meet bi-monthly to discuss any issues which need resolving and to plan bi-annual get-togethers for the Listening Team. Four 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

John Rumble

Jacqui Gifford (Administrator)

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

Administrator

We have an 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 2023, there were no costs incurred, as the administrator generously declined to be paid for her work on Hear4U.

Safeguarding

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

THE LISTENERS

Training

Of the 14 Listeners (ten women and four men) who were trained in active listening last year, eight (four men and four women) are still involved with the listening team. The Steering Group has agreed to try to recruit and train 6 more volunteers.

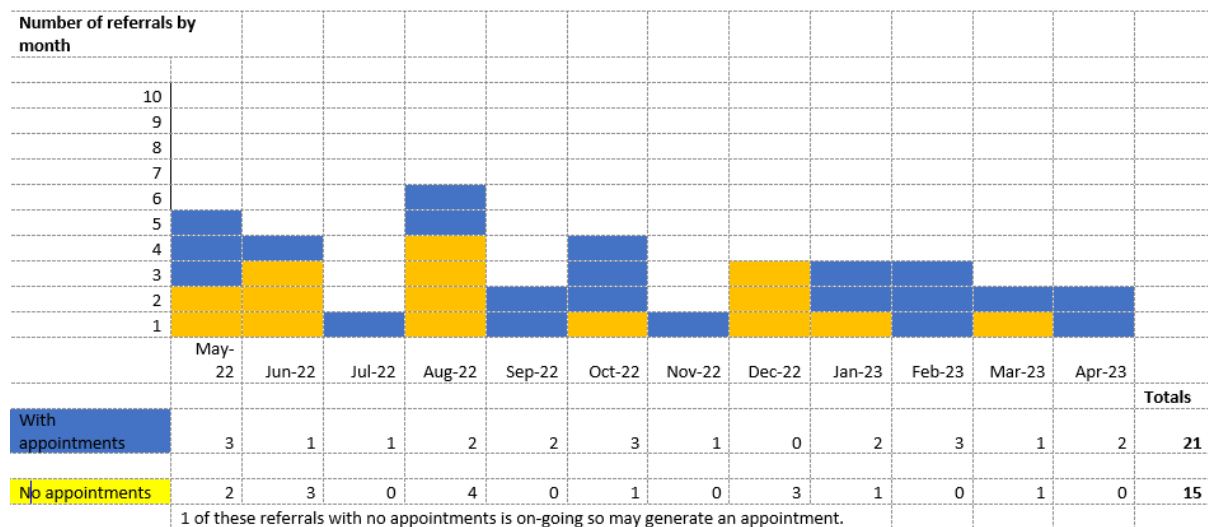
Ongoing support through supervisors

Each listener has a supervisor. The supervisors are members of the clergy from across Broxbourne. There are currently 4 supervisors. The listeners are encouraged to have a meeting with their supervisor after they have had a listening session.

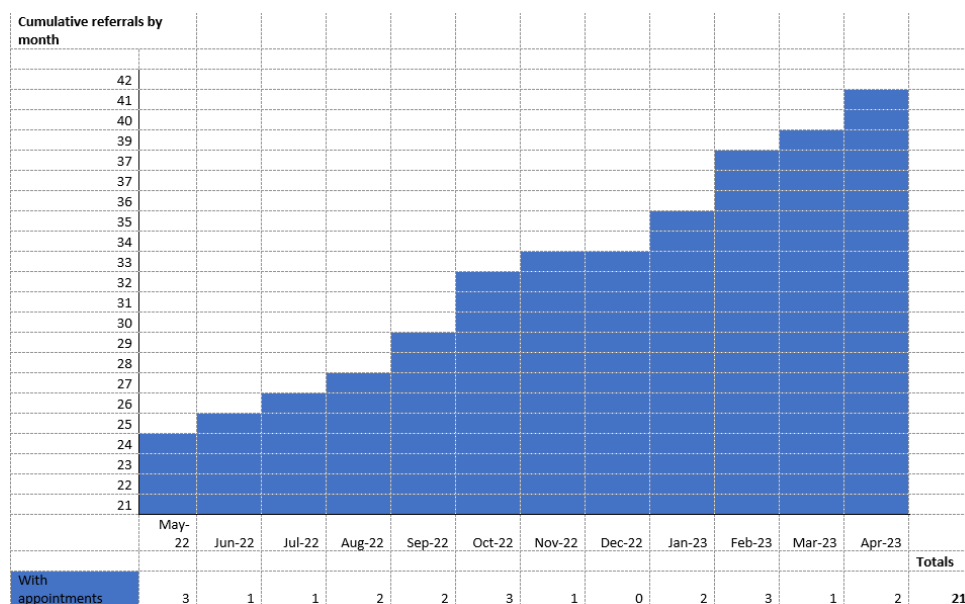
Team evenings

The listeners, supervisors, administrator, safeguarding officer and social prescribers 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.

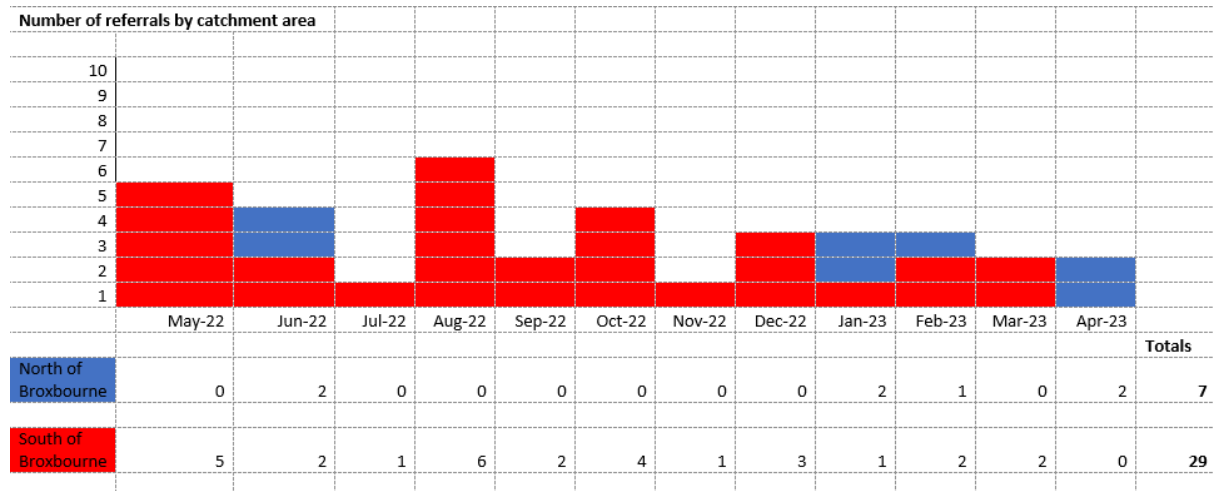
ACTIVITY



From May 2022 until the end of April 2023, there were 37 referrals, resulting in 21 people having listening sessions. This compares with 43 referrals in 2021/22, resulting in 20 listening sessions. The reasons for referrals not resulting in listening sessions were varied, from people not understanding the service they were being referred to, to the client being too unwell to come. Of the 36 referrals, eight were men and 28 were women.



There were no referrals in December 2022, but apart from that, there was a steady flow of referrals throughout the year.



For much of the year, we were finding that nearly all the referrals were coming from the south of the Borough (ie Cheshunt and Waltham Cross) and very few from the North of the Borough (ie Hoddesdon, Broxbourne and Wormley). This was because the social prescribers in the north of the borough did not have anyone supporting people in the middle age groups. This started to change by January 2023, as new social prescribers were appointed in the north of the Borough.

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 21 people who have had at least one Listening session with Hear4u between May 2022 and April 2023 were as follows:

Age group	Number
20-29	0
30-39	0
40-49	4
50-59	1
60-69	6
70-79	5
80+	2
Unknown	3
Total	21

15 of those clients were women, and 6 (28%) were men. This is a similar ratio to last year. Currently, of our eight listeners, four (50%) are men. When recruiting more volunteer listeners, we will look to engage more women than men.



ISSUES

Referrals

In general, the referral system is working well. We occasionally receive referrals from people who are too unwell or who are reluctant to engage. We are pleased to be receiving more referrals from the north of the Borough, which had been a gap we were experiencing in 2021/22.

Capacity

The team has the capacity to take more referrals. We are planning to train more volunteers to replace those who have had to stop volunteering in this way.

Safeguarding

We have not had any safeguarding issues this year.

COMMENTS FROM LISTENERS

The following are some comments from listeners:

"It's an enormous privilege to sit and listen to the people I have met. I cannot imagine what life would be like if I'd gone through what they have gone through without anyone to talk about things to." John Forrest

"Each person we listen to has their own story to tell, and the joy and privilege of our role is not to be an expert providing answers, but a listening friend who simply helps them see the wood for the trees and find their own way forward." Nick Sharp

"I love those 'light bulb' moments when a person hears themselves talking about a possible way forwards." Diana Forrest

"Quote from one of my clients.....words to the effect of: 'It's the first time I've heard myself think and then tried listening to myself. It helped a lot!'" Dave Lee

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

Four of the trained listeners have run a Hoddesdon Bereavement Support Group, meeting on the second Thursday morning of each month, at Hoddesdon Parish Church. It is planned for this to finish in July 2023, and be replaced by the 6-week course Grief Encounters, which will be run twice a year, in partnership with Isabel Hospice.

Below are flyers for the Hear4U Listening Team, and the September/October 2023 Grief Encounters:

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 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 e.g. social prescribers at the GP surgery. 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:

Diana Forrest Hear4U Lead – hear4ulisting@outlook.com
Jacqui Gifford Hear4U Administrator – hear4uhoddesdon@outlook.com

**COMPASSIONATE
COMMUNITIES**



across eastern Hertfordshire

Grief Encounters

**A 6 week themed facilitated
bereavement peer support group**

Loss and grief affects many people in many ways.

Grief Encounters offers a 6 week facilitated themed bereavement peer support group giving people a safe space to tell their story, express their feelings, and find support from others who may be going through similar experiences.

Open to anyone over 18yrs

Course dates: Thursdays 10.30am – 12noon
21, 28 September
5, 12, 19, 26 October

St Catherine and St Pauls Church (opposite Morrison's)
Pauls Lane, Hoddesdon EN11 8TR

**For more information or to book
onto a course please contact
Family Support on 01707 382563
or email:
family.support@isabelhospice.org.uk**

Working together with



CONTACT

For further information, please contact:

Diana Forrest, Hear4U Coordinator, hear4ulisting@outlook.com

Jacqui Gifford, Hear4U Administrator, hear4uhoddesdon@outlook.com