



Haringey

Reach and
Connect

Bi-Annual Review: 2019-2021

A request, a necessity.

A want, a wish...

A call, a conversation,

Then a plan and action,

We reach and we connect...

(Reena Raj, Reach and Connect, 2020)

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Haringey Speaks about Reach and Connect...

Thank you...you have really held me together during this time of the virus. You have seen me at my worst and my best through it.

Before Reach and Connect I used to feel so alone with things. Now I know I can get the help I need.

I have to say thank you. You have made me independent. I thank God for you. If there is anything I can do for you, let me know. I am proud of myself... and I am very grateful to you.

I could never in a month of Sundays do what you have done on my own. My life is all the better for having you in it.

I cannot emphasise enough, how Reach and Connect has helped me. I have been battling alone with numerous problems and having nowhere to turn to help my elderly parents. Then I was referred to Reach and Connect and (my Connector) just sorted everything out. The weight she took off my shoulders was immense. I will always be grateful.

Key Achievements

1313 referrals received for clients aged 50 – to over 100 years old

£29,071 in grants and benefits claimed and **£27,211** in money owed to clients

1365 hours of volunteering completed: Value Added = **£14,810.25** (London Living Wage 2021)

Haringey Circle Medication Delivery Service made over **750** pharmacy deliveries during the pandemic

238 Telephone Friendship pairings totalling **1365** hours of calls since April 2020

37 clients have engaged with a Telephone Friendship Circle

Beginnings...

Haringey Reach and Connect began in July 2019, to support over 50s to enjoy “happy, healthy lives”. Our focus was to offer signposting, brief interventions and workshops to enable clients to improve their wellbeing in six different areas: **Connect; Be Active; Take Notice; Keep Learning; Give to Others; Stay Independent**

With three Community Connectors, we began to reach out to and connect with local residents, voluntary groups and statutory services through our drop ins, community events and other engagement opportunities.

Outreach yielded referrals, and the service gained momentum: we visited clients in their homes and in the community, and began to build a team of volunteers to enrich our work. From the get-go we have linked clients to the right support and have actively built community through our projects.

As the service took shape, three Community Connectors became eight, and our work evolved into two distinct but equally important strands, illustrated here with case studies:

- **Working with individual clients to resolve problems.**
- **Actively promoting “ways to wellbeing” through workshops.**

Case studies: Working with individual clients to resolve problems

Case Study 1:

Ways to Wellbeing - stay independent, keep learning, connect

Referral from a social worker for 76 year old male client, returning home from hospital/care home stay, with arrears in rent and bills. Housebound, with a twice a day care package, he enjoys watching TV and has a passion for reading.

The Community Connector arranged for:

- Rent, council tax and care agency arrears to be paid off (court action had been threatened for rent).
- Direct debits for water and gas bills to be set up
- Pensions to be paid into current account (client had several accounts making it difficult for him to manage his money)
- Referral to Housebound Library Service

Case Study 2: Ways to Wellbeing - stay independent, connect

Referral from Local Area Coordinator for 69 year old female client, housebound with multiple health issues, who had been the victim of financial abuse. Whilst the necessary action concerning the abuse was in hand, and the client had a very supportive neighbour helping her, the client's financial affairs were in disarray and she would need support to make sense of and manage her own affairs.

The Community Connector worked with the client and her neighbour to:

- Review outstanding bills and contact companies/agencies owed to explain the situation, establish the true extent of debt, and find out what support they might provide.
- Contact Step Change to create a debt action plan and to gain advice on what to do next and how her debts could be settled.
- Explore setting up a bank account which the client could access by phone, as client has no access to internet. This would enable the client to shop and pay her bills and control her own money, from the comfort of her own home.
- Refer client to HAIL/Vibrance Personalisation Service for ongoing support with paperwork and managing her affairs.
- Contact Council to get Key Safe code changed for safety, given the financial abuse.

Case studies: Actively promoting 'ways to wellbeing' through workshops

Case Study 3:

Ways to Wellbeing - keep learning, get active, connect, give to others, take notice

Working in partnership with a Local Area Coordinator, we developed "The M Word"- a six week course to train 12 local women about the signs, symptoms and support available for the menopause. At its heart, this venture emphasised the necessity for both self-care and peer support.



The M Word" group February 2020

Case studies: Working with individual clients to resolve problems

Case Study 4:

Ways to Wellbeing - take notice, connect, keep learning

Our Positive Ageing Workshops gave clients time and space to meet and reflect on the process of ageing.

J, an 83 year old client said:

“The Positive Ageing session (...) was a very good opportunity for 50+ people to come together and discuss mindsets toward older age and how we can achieve the values we need. I have more and more conversations with people I meet (...) who need this opportunity to get out occasionally and talk about life and mortality rather than get overwhelmed with the unpleasant aspects of later life (...)”

Case Study 5:

Ways to Wellbeing – take notice, stay independent, keep learning, get active

138 clients attended our **Stay Warm, Stay Well Workshops** designed to support clients through the winter of 2020/21.

These utilised the expertise of various organisations:

- Energy advice workshop - LEAP.
- Mental Health wellbeing workshop - Haringey Mind
- Green Homes Grants workshop - Haringey Council Carbon Management Officer
- Hot Tips for Warm Homes - HEET
- Chair based exercise session run by Spurs Foundation

Nearly 70% of these attendees came from N15 and N17 postcode areas, which have the highest incidence of fuel poverty in the borough.

And then, the Pandemic...

That first lockdown in March 2020 radically disrupted life for our clients, many of whom are vulnerable. Our face to face casework became telephone support, and as we adapted and found creative ways to meet this new challenge and the needs it exposed, new and exciting opportunities also arose around the ways in which we provided support.

We noted the following needs, which came suddenly and sharply into focus in that first, three-month long lockdown, when the messaging was to “stay at home”:

- **Need 1: Tackling social isolation / digital exclusion**
- **Need 2: Support for shielding clients/ ensuring access to essential supplies such as food and medicine**

We responded in a number of ways:

Keeping in Touch (KIT) calls (Ways to Wellbeing - connect, stay independent) – we called our most vulnerable clients each week for a friendly chat and to pick up any urgent needs such as access to food/ medicine. We supplemented this through referrals to Age UK’s Telephone Friendship Service and the NHS responders ‘Check in and Chat’ service.

Need 1: Tackling social isolation / digital exclusion

Telephone Friendship (Ways to Wellbeing - connect, give to others) – KIT calls revealed the extent of social isolation exacerbated by the pandemic, and compounded by digital exclusion. Recruiting, vetting and inducting around 200 volunteers, the Reach and Connect Telephone Friendship Service launched in April 2020. Adults across the age range, along with some clients eager to “give something back”, became volunteers.

The service continues to provide clients with a weekly, friendly chat. Both clients and volunteers attest to its value:

Client called about his volunteer to say that: (She- the volunteer) is a really nice person with a beautiful personality. He very much enjoyed the conversations he has had as they have made him feel better and he has laughed. He is normally very shy but (she) helped “to bring him out of his shell”. (Client)

As an older person with health issues I have only been able to offer telephone befriending. The level of support has been impressive: when I had a concern about a person I was befriending, it was quickly dealt with by my connector contacting their GP. I have found every call rewarding and interesting.” (Volunteer)

The conversations are rewarding and occasionally funny – he’s quick to laugh and we can swap healthy banter. It really is lovely hearing him laugh. We very quickly swung into an easy, companionable routine. His reminiscences are interesting and it’s a privilege to hear them. (Volunteer)

We chat...it’s been great, we go over the time as one conversation leads to another! (Client)

I have found the telephone friendship calls to be really rewarding and interesting. It is wonderful to know I am making even a small difference in someone’s life, and it has helped me to feel more connected during lockdown, too. (Volunteer)

Telephone Friendship continued...

Yes... Time flies. I am so grateful and feel blessed to be able to interact with this lovely lady. Also, I love being able to help in a small way as a telephone friend. It has taught me so much and I have more to learn.

P is a delight as she is so grounded, insightful, intelligent and interesting as well as very caring (...)
I feel privileged to have the opportunity to get to know her. She is a real example. Most humbling of all is that she says she looks forward to our conversations and then I know just how worthwhile this service is! (Volunteer)

I really look forward to it...we seem to like the same kind of things. She's been very understanding, she's lovely. I'm very happy with the calls. (Client)

Telephone Friendship Circles (Ways to Wellbeing – connect, take notice)

– the success of our Telephone Friendship Service led us to wonder how we could provide not just one to one conversation, but a group chat for clients from which they might also gain peer support. Four Telephone Friendship Circles were set up each providing 12 sessions of support – a men's group, a women's group, a mixed group, and 'Topic Talk' – for clients with additional difficulties such as communication disability.

It is hoped that some of these clients will want to take the friendships they establish on these calls into the 'real world' as lockdown eases. Client's comments on the connectedness they felt as a result of the call:

- "very, very nice...happy."
- "To be together is wonderful...we can share things together."
- "I enjoyed everything. Everybody's lovely! I wish everyone in the world was like this, and there'd be no more fighting."
- "I found it nice...I felt good...I've got tears in my eyes thinking about it...I thought, 'I've done something nice.'"

The following excerpts are from a Topic Talk session about 'Spring' highlights how this project makes clients feel and encourages them to not only 'connect' but also to 'take notice':

- "Thank goodness!"
- "Little daffodils, geraniums growing, blooming, smelling sweet"
- "The wind loses its frostiness"
- "Daffodils...birds on trees..."
- "Happy"
- "Mornings...dew fresh and lovely"
- "Everything coming alive again"
- "You feel that freshness within you"

We didn't know each other before, but we all came together as one – discussing with each other – the one teaches the other – I learn from you, you learn from me!

Intergenerational projects (Ways to Wellbeing - connect, give to others)

As well as linking volunteers and clients from across the borough, the Telephone Friendship Service and Circles connect volunteers and clients from different generations.

Speaking with clients, it became apparent that recurrent lockdowns had cut them off from their grandchildren and the opportunity to interact with the wider community.

We worked with local partners to link people of different generations in meaningful ways, despite the lockdowns, through two ventures which aim to improve the lives of both the older and the younger people involved:

- The Letter Writing Project with Generation Exchange and a local primary school. This is now in its second round of children and older adults forging “friendships” through writing letters.
- Smile Project with 4th Wood Green Cub Scouts (featured on page 15)

Smile Project

Older people made films about their lives in lockdown. These were shared online with Cubs, who thought about what they might do to help older people on their own to get through this challenging time.

Cubs were given canvas bags which they filled with items they hoped would help their older person – jokes, seeds, biscuits, sweets, socks, and tea bags. The bags were distributed by Community Connectors.



The Cub leader saw the benefits of the project to the younger people:

“The project was a great way to show them that there are people of all ages out there, and that they can make a difference to other people’s lives. It was great to make them think about other people and try to put themselves in their shoes. And it taught them that doing something nice for someone else can be fun at the same time”

One Cub said: “I am happy to make someone else happy.” Another said, “I used a quote to inspire them to keep having fun. I created a dice which had six sides of emotions, so when they roll the dice they will have to either smile, sing etc. I hope they feel jovial about receiving their gifts and enjoy growing the seeds”.

The older people receiving the bags also felt it had made a difference. **One said:** “It is such a lovely idea. I sat down and enjoyed looking at all the things R had chosen for me. It was very touching that he had put so much thought into it. I don’t have a family and spent 4 months on my own during lockdown, so knowing there are young people out there who are kind and caring has definitely put a smile on my face!”

Support for shielding clients/ ensuring access to essential supplies such as food and medicine

Working with other agencies such as Connected Communities and our sister service, Haringey Circle's Medication Delivery Service, we became a vital part of Haringey's emergency response to the pandemic.

We also set up our own emergency fund for clients in need of essential items and made festive food parcel deliveries on Christmas Day, working alongside Felix Project. The following case studies illustrate this work:

Covid Case Study 1: (Ways to Wellbeing - stay independent)

Client: Female, 58 years old.

Background: Physical and mental health issues. Client had been hospitalised with Covid 19.

Initial referral: Pre-pandemic client requested support around energy bills and taxi card which were achieved. Further support was provided for client's financial and other concerns during the pandemic:

Support given:

- Community Connector successfully applied for grant from Kidney Care UK for £300 to tide client over.
- Successfully applied for Universal Credit and then secured £880 refund of Universal Credit wrongly deducted from the client.
- Raised and resolved issues around care package put in place following client's discharge from hospital and following her diagnosis and treatment of coronavirus.
- Registered client on government website as extremely vulnerable – to receive food parcels.

Covid Case Study 2:

(Ways to Wellbeing - stay independent, take notice, connect)

Client: Male, 56 years old.

Background: Self-referral from client who is shielding.

Initial referral: Requested support around his mobile phone, benefits and rent arrears.

Support given:

- Community Connector liaised with Department for Work and Pensions and the Disability Employment Advisor to support client with his benefits and with Homes for Haringey Income Collection Team regarding rent arrears. Also signposted to Shelter for further advice around housing.
- Referral to Connected Communities for food parcel; delivery of Food Bag from Tottenham Food Bank; referral to North London Community Consortium for daily hot meal; referral to Antwerp Arms for hot lunch twice a week.
- Supported client with liaising with his GP practice to update and deliver repeat prescriptions.
- Referral made to Community Health Service, Diabetes Specialist Health Nurse to advise on diet/nutrition and medication.
- Referral to Good Sam for support with shopping and other essential items via NHS Responder Volunteer. Connector made additional delivery of food and topped up Gas for client.
- Signposted to British Gas and SHINE to help with emergency gas payments and for energy advice.
- Referral to Haringey Reach and Connect Telephone Friendship service.
- Referral to Power To Live for counselling support and to Engage for ongoing practical support.



Festive Food Parcels delivered on Christmas Day 2020 in partnership with the Felix Project



Haringey Circle Medication Delivery Service 2020

Building the Future – The Ways to Wellbeing

As we emerge from the crisis of Covid 19, we reflect upon how much we have learned. Of course, there is still more to learn, and, in the 'new normal' there will be additional and emerging needs to meet. For example, the impact of the enforced isolation of lockdowns, of bereavements and long-covid



To move forward in this post-covid landscape, we look back to the **'Ways to Wellbeing'** at the heart of Reach and Connect. This framework, coupled with co-production with our clients will remain, and be embedded, deeper still, in our approach: We are refreshing our communications to reflect this and have also completed a survey to gather the opinions and ideas of previous service users, to feed into our future plans. See page 24.

We are working to develop our service by offering the following in 2021:

- 'Coping with Significant Change and Loss' and 'Managing Depression' psycho educational group work.
- Setting up community based 'Shared Reading Groups'.
- Working with Wise Thoughts to scope out new LGBTQI+ activities.
- Developing 'Telephone Friendship Circles'.
- 'My Forever Home' – working with Homes for Haringey to support new sheltered housing residents as they settle in.
- Launching our 'Walking Buddies' and 'Face to Face Friendship' service.
- Developing an engagement strategy for west Haringey.
- Becoming 'Trusted Assessors' – supporting clients with basic adaptations to their homes.
- Promoting Haringey Circle's membership offer and unique 'At Home' services – providing cleaning and other help around the home such as washing, ironing, hoovering and tidying, gardening and other handyperson/DIY tasks.

Appendices

Appendix A: Reach and Connect Survey April 2021

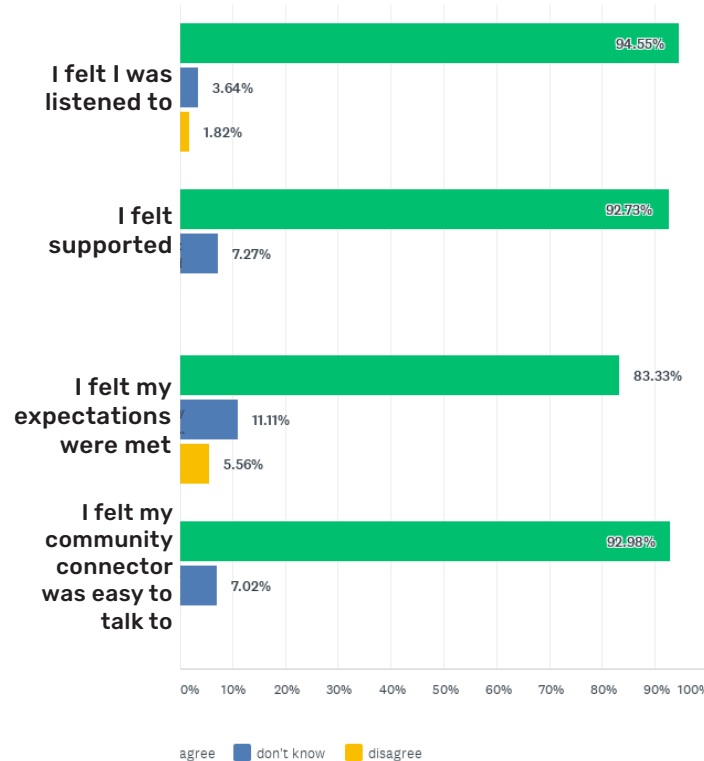
In May 2021 we developed a survey to find out what we have done well and how we might improve our service in the future.

Our survey was sent to clients, volunteers, and organisations and agencies who refer people to us.

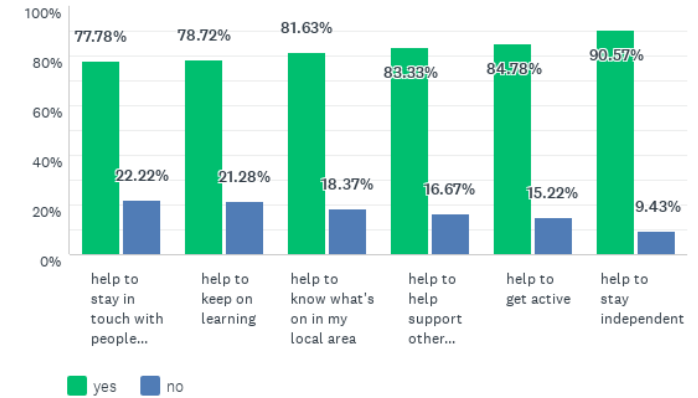
On the following pages we have provided a snapshot of service satisfaction from each part of the survey.

Client survey

How do you feel about the way we worked with you?



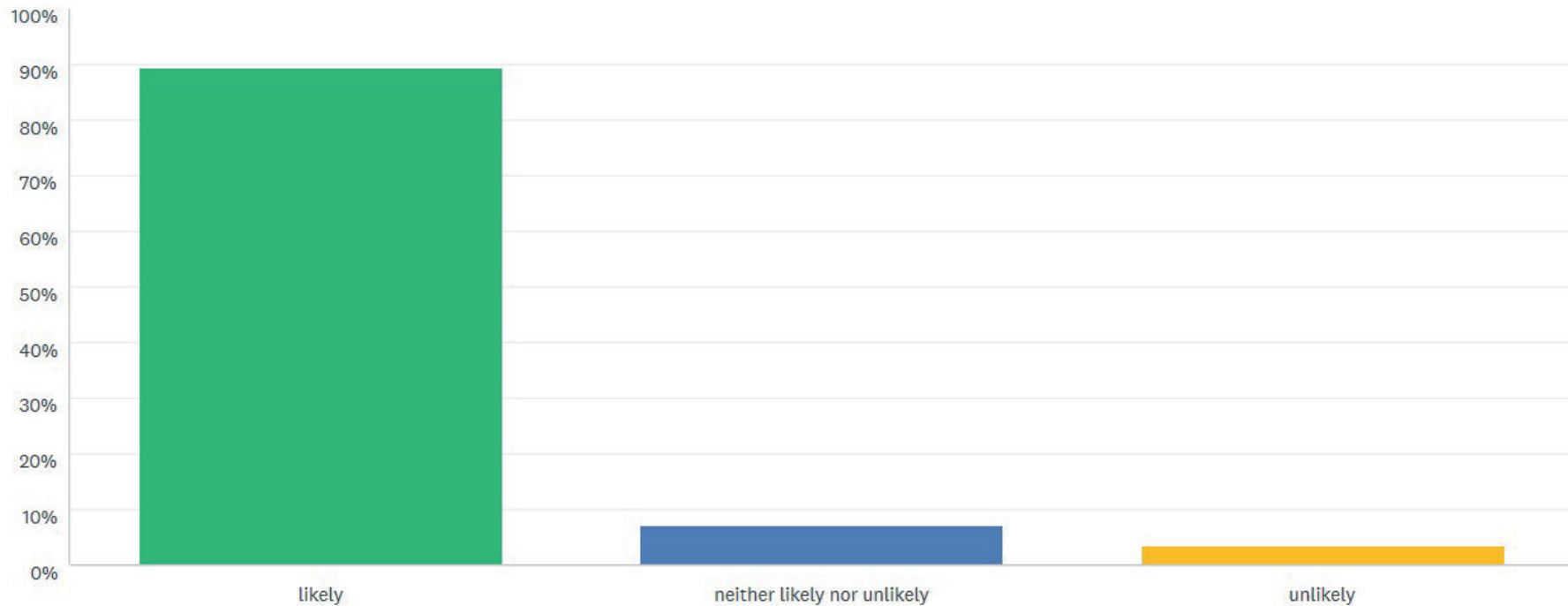
How can we help you to improve your wellbeing?



Appendix A: Reach and Connect Survey April 2021

Client survey

How likely are you to use us again?

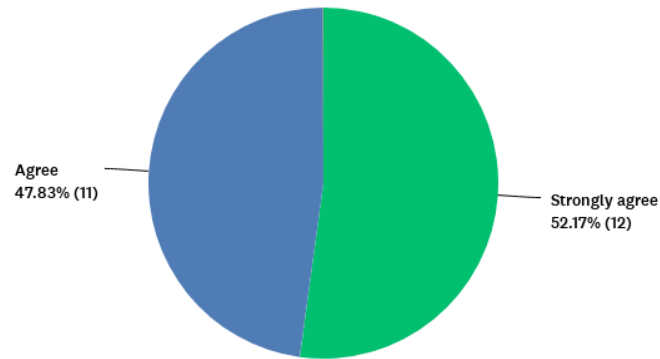


- 95% of clients felt listened to
- 93% of clients felt their community connector was easy to talk to
- 83% of clients felt their expectations were met
- 93% of clients felt supported

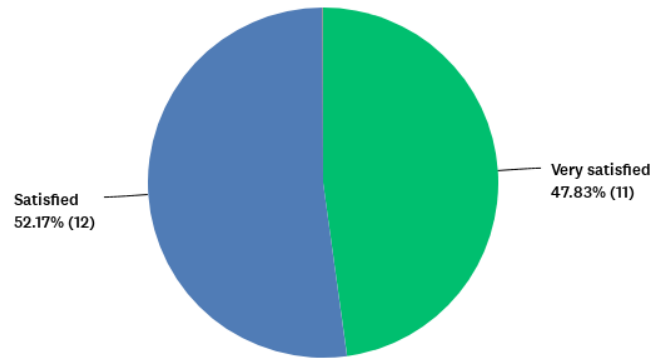
Appendix A: Reach and Connect Client Survey April 2021

Stakeholder survey

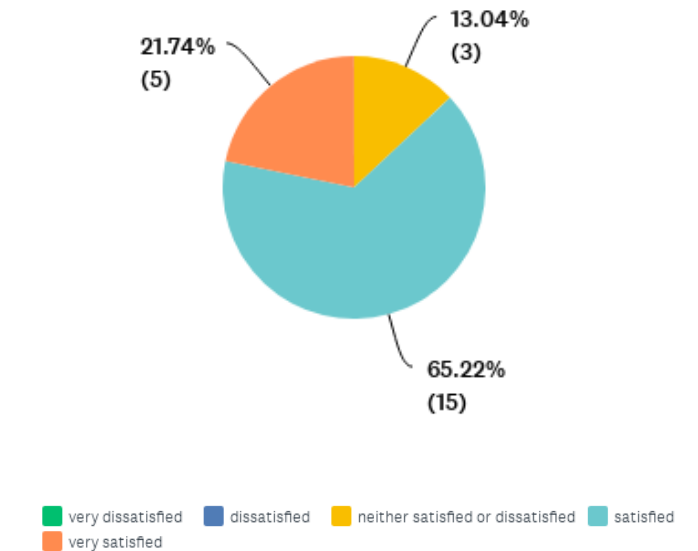
Is making a referral using our online form easy?



Once you have made a referral, how satisfied have you been with our response?



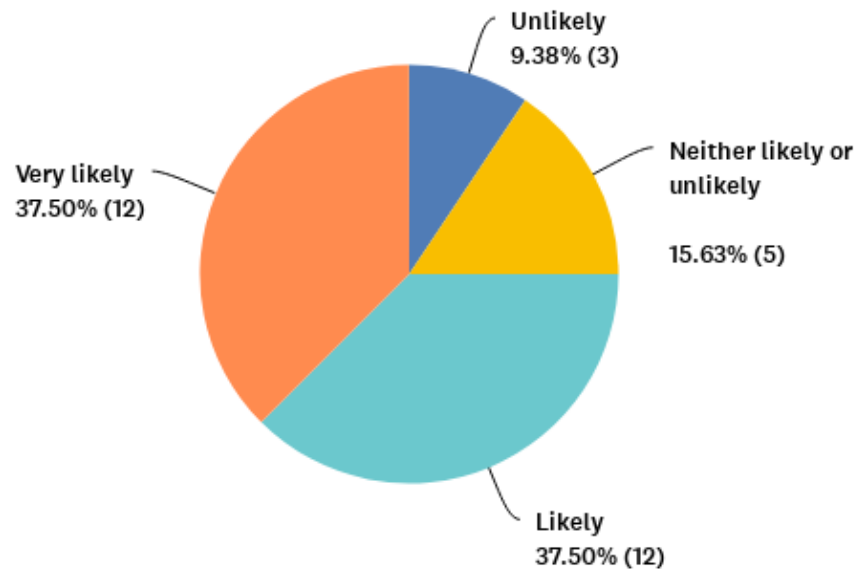
How satisfied were you with the outcome we achieved for the person referred?



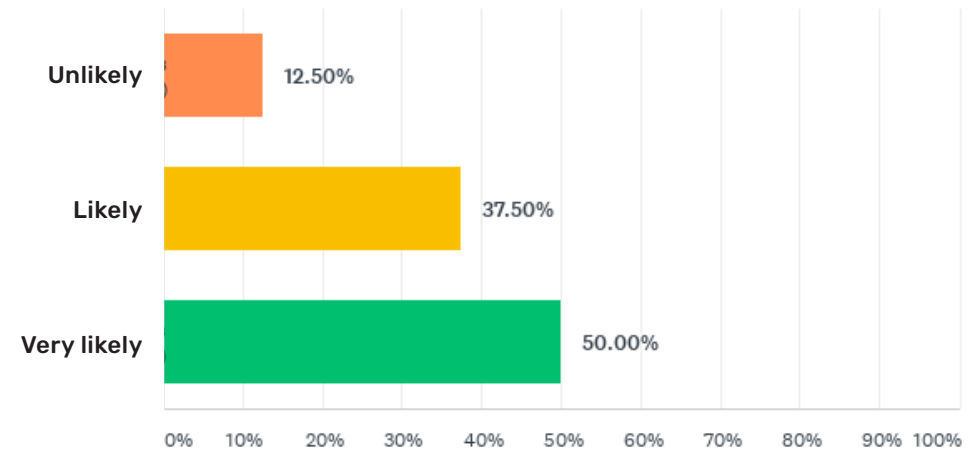
Appendix A: Reach and Connect Client Survey April 2021

Volunteer survey

How likely are you to volunteer with us again?



How likely is it that you would recommend volunteering with us to others?



Appendix B: About us

Haringey Reach and Connect is delivered by a consortium of local third sector organisations led by **Public Voice**. The other consortium members are **Mind in Haringey**, **Wise Thoughts**, and **Vibrance**, working in partnership with the **Haringey Over 50s Forum**.

Each consortium member employs two Community Connectors, based in different wards and localities across the borough.

The service works in tandem with its 'sister' service, **Haringey Circle**: This is a membership organisation that facilitates older people to organise and attend social events and provides opportunities for social connections and mutual support. The monthly events calendar is at the core of the Circle offer but members can also benefit from a 'At Home' service which includes cleaning, gardening, and small repair jobs.

Discovering Circle saved our lives during lockdown with the prescription delivery, then they came to repair the damage our children had done to our house post lockdown! Being indoors for the best part of a year has made us very unwell. The walking group was an opportunity to address all of the issues arising from being sedentary over the lockdown due to caring for a clinically extremely vulnerable child and shielding them from coronavirus. I can't stop raving enough about the team. You are all awesome. (Circle Member)



*working in
partnership with*



www.reachandconnect.net