



Impact Report

April 2024 to
March 2025



CEO Welcome

2024-25 has been one of strategic renewal for Self Help UK. Over the past twelve months, we've spent time listening to our stakeholders and beneficiaries to better understand what they want and need from us as a charity.

Our refreshed strategy reaffirms our commitment to peer-led community development. Guided by a new Theory of Change, we will focus our efforts on three core areas:

1. Empowering individuals
2. Empowering communities
3. Empowering the sector

We're excited to share our full strategy with you very soon. In the meantime, thank you for your ongoing support, enjoy reading about this year's impact, and watch this space!



Ian Boyd
Chief Executive Officer
Self Help UK



About us

Vision:

Empowering individuals and communities through guidance, connection, and peer support to create a healthier society.

Mission:

To **equip, empower, and encourage** people to take control of their health and wellbeing.

- **We equip** people with knowledge and expertise, connecting them with the right support.
- **We empower** people to take control of their health and wellbeing.
- **We encourage** innovation to create change.

Values:

- Empowering Others
- Putting People First
- Acting With Integrity
- Showing Compassion



Our work

Self Help UK has a long-standing commitment to empowering individuals and communities through peer support. This has been shown to improve health and wellbeing.

Our projects have addressed specific needs within communities, including providing practical and emotional support to people affected by cancer.

Our Annual Impact Report highlights the significant role these services play in improving the lives of our beneficiaries. The demand for these services continues to grow, demonstrating the ongoing need for our work.

We place a strong emphasis on community engagement and collaboration. We have joined events to connect with communities, understand their challenges, and ensure our services remain responsive to real needs.

We work closely with individuals with lived experience of health conditions and social issues. This means that their views shape our services. This approach ensures that our work remains relevant and directly addresses peoples' needs.

A key example is our **Deaf Cancer Support Service**. This service was established in response to the specific challenges faced by Deaf individuals affected by cancer.

Through consultation and collaboration with service users, we have ensured the service is accessible, culturally appropriate, and effective in addressing the specific needs of this community. This user-led approach ensures that services are designed by, and for, the people they support.





The increasing pressures on the UK's healthcare system, combined with rising health inequalities, make peer support services more essential than ever. Many individuals face challenges in accessing timely and appropriate support through traditional services, meaning that alternative, community-led interventions play a critical role in bridging this gap.

Self Help UK's work is particularly relevant in the current climate, where social isolation and mental health concerns are on the rise. By providing accessible, community-based support, we have helped reduce loneliness, improve wellbeing, and lessen the strain on statutory services.

Our commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging ensures a wide range of community needs are met, reinforcing the importance of peer-led support.

Self Help UK's Annual Impact Report provides evidence of the positive outcomes achieved through our services, demonstrating improvements in wellbeing, social connectedness, engagement with healthcare, and self-management of health conditions.

Research on peer support models consistently shows that community-led interventions improve health outcomes, reduce loneliness, and support individuals in managing long-term conditions.

These factors highlight the urgency and necessity of Self Help UK's work in addressing critical health and social issues.

2024-25 service highlights



Last year, a total of 43,207 people were directly and indirectly impacted by our support and services.

Service highlights include:

- **40 cancer patients** within primary care settings in Nottingham receiving health needs assessments.
 - **294 people signing up** for our learning centre courses and workshops and gaining knowledge and understanding of peer support.
 - **81 people including both Deaf people and carers affected by cancer** being offered clear, accessible support in British Sign Language (BSL), helping them to confidently navigate their cancer journey.
 - **40 volunteers for the Deaf Cancer Support service** enabling us to reach even more people.
- **308 clients** in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire-South affected by cancer receiving support from our Beyond Diagnosis service in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support.
 - **119 cancer patients** undergoing prehabilitation at Nottingham City Hospital receiving support from our Social Prescribing Link Workers.

Monthly newsletter:



Finance

As an overview of our income and expenditure over the past year, our figures show the majority of our income comes from grant funding, and our greatest cost is staffing.

● Government grants

● Other grants

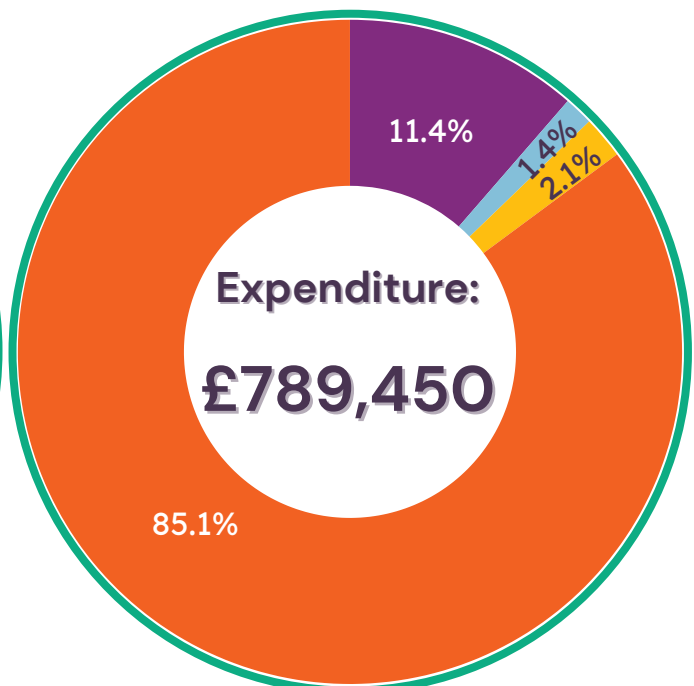
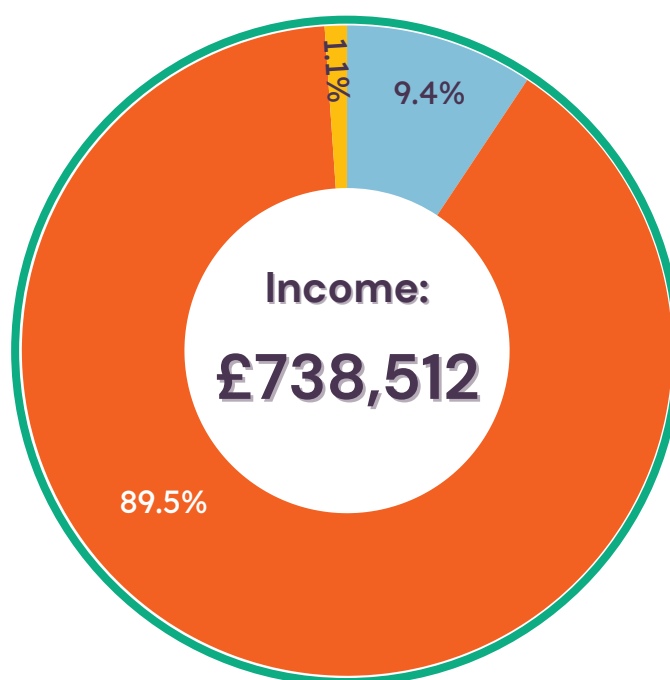
● Donations & fundraising

● Core operations & administration

● Communications & marketing

● Programme & service delivery

● Staff costs



Our projects



Deaf Cancer Support

Empowering Deaf cancer patients through specialised support

The Deaf Cancer Support Project (DCSP) provides vital support to Deaf people across the UK affected by cancer.

From April 2024 to March 2025, the project continued to break down barriers by offering clear, accessible support in British Sign Language (BSL), helping Deaf individuals confidently navigate their cancer journey.

Key achievements:

- **A total of 81 members**, including both deaf people and carers, were supported across all our DCSP work (an increase of 33% on the previous year).
- **40 volunteers** supporting the service.
- **Over 25 Deaf people have been supported** through weekly one-to-one sessions, peer support groups, and the provision of BSL-accessible information.
- **Over 1,200 people reached** through awareness campaigns and events like Deaf Awareness Week and Deaf Day at CityLit.
- **Over 15 Cancer Awareness presentations** delivered to Deaf organisations.

Service users reported feeling more informed, supported, and less isolated. The project worked closely with healthcare providers to promote more inclusive cancer care for the Deaf community.



Challenges and lessons learned

Establishing the peer support hubs has proven challenging. Many collaborations with deaf organisations have already set up their respective hubs, such as lunch clubs and coffee mornings. This situation necessitated a shift in our approach to launching the hubs, starting with Derby, which is local and has a larger Deaf community. With support from the British Deaf Association (BDA), we promoted and established it as a standalone Deaf hub focused on coffee mornings, which proved successful. Currently, this Derby hub operates once a month and hosts quarterly stalls with other organisations that provide services to the deaf community. More hubs are planned for the next fiscal year.

Due to the changing social climate, volunteer retention has been challenging. Many are unable to maintain their commitment to the Deaf Cancer Support Project. We are exploring new strategies to improve engagement and build a more sustainable volunteer base.

"The team's cancer awareness talks have been extremely well received by our community, offering accessible and vital health information in British Sign Language. These sessions have helped to break down barriers and increase understanding around cancer awareness and prevention within the Deaf community. We are proud to be part of a project that promotes health equality and empowers Deaf individuals to make informed decisions about their well-being."

Manchester Deaf Centre

Deaf Cancer Support

Continued...

Sustainability and future plans

In the coming year, we're planning:

- **A website refresh**, to include pages with BSL resources.
- **Deaf community presentations** with 3D anatomical resources to illustrate cancer visually.
- **3 more hubs** across the UK, established using our revised approach.
- **Creation of the Volunteer Befriender scheme** to befriend Deaf Cancer users in the local community.
- **To establish a presence in Northern Ireland** for the NI Deaf community with an employed Outreach Officer. They will have hubs and support through the NI health system.
- **To establish a presence in Scotland** for the Scottish Deaf community with an Outreach Officer. They will have peer support groups, hubs and support.
- **Greater involvement in high-level meetings** with Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), health trusts, and important meetings related to cancer care in partnership with Macmillan.
- **Collaboration with Macmillan** on their 'Who am I?' campaign, featuring 10 key cancer survivors who share their respective stories of health inequality.

Conclusion

Over the past year, our team has evolved. Claire Adshead was appointed as the new Project Manager, and Veronica Stewart was promoted to Coordinator.

Ten staff from the wider Self Help UK team completed Level One British Sign Language (BSL) training, enhancing our cultural awareness and commitment to accessibility.

Our national research collaboration with Manchester University's Social Research with Deaf People (S.O.R.D) team continued, alongside contributions to UK government advisory panels on BSL and issues affecting the Deaf community.

In October, over fifty volunteers and partners gathered for our Deaf Celebration Awards, held at the Quad in Derby and hosted by Yvonne Cobb.

Our team led a national workshop at the Macmillan Cancer Support Conference on end-of-life care for Deaf people and were shortlisted for a Macmillan Excellence Award.

We expanded our national Deaf delivery network with new connections in Northern Ireland and Scotland and launched our first Deaf Hub in Derby.

Thanks to the Jane Beech Trust and Derbyshire ICB funding, we conducted an end-of-life research project focused on Deaf people with cancer and developed downloadable palliative care resources. The Carers Federation also supported us in establishing Deaf support groups for carers in Nottingham. We are grateful to both funders for their invaluable support.



Beyond Diagnosis



Providing comprehensive support to those affected by cancer

Our Macmillan Beyond Diagnosis Service supports people affected by cancer, to improve their resilience and wellbeing, and face their journey with strength, dignity, and support.

Key achievements:

- **308 clients** supported
- **87 volunteers** supporting the service
- **Award Finalists** as the ICB Health and Care Awards 2024
- **100% reported satisfaction** with the service
- **9 in 10 clients reported better mental health and wellbeing**, including increased confidence, greater positivity, increased physical activity, and better able to look after themselves.

Through close partnerships with NHS services and community partners, strengthened further by the introduction of our new Cancer Support Lead role, we developed a seamless referral process. We make first contact with clients within three working days of referral and provide a Holistic Needs Assessment (HNA) within fifteen working days. By improving systems and processes, we maximised the support offered, ensuring the best service to the community.



Our team of volunteers continued to make a vital impact, gaining recognition from Macmillan and surpassing the Macmillan Volunteering Quality Standards. With nine staff and seventy volunteers, we provided life changing support to over three-hundred people on their journey with cancer, with feedback showing a 100% satisfaction rate.

We began projects to engage with cancer peer support groups, and established the Stronger Together support group. Based on our learning, our new Peer Support Events and Groups provision will be ready for launch in Summer 2025, helping us reach more people in need of support, connection, and improved wellbeing.



"This experience has allowed me to develop my transferable skills such as communication and listening skills, in wanting to be a doctor, I think that it is very important to learn from early on how to emotionally connect with people and to be able to understand them."

Francine - Nottingham Trent University, Biomedical Science

Beyond Diagnosis

Continued...

Challenges and lessons learned

We have consolidated our processes into a set of Standard Operating Procedures. We changed the structure of our documentation system, to maximise efficiency and help the team give support with greater ease.

Our Referrals Administrator now makes the initial call to confirm the service is still wanted by the prospective client. This has saved a lot of time and effort for our Care Coordinators, enabling them to focus on providing support rather than managing entry to the service.

Sustainability and future plans

We will build on the success of the Beyond Diagnosis service over the past ten years and on our over forty-year legacy of empowering individuals and communities through guidance, connection, and peer support.

We will continue to support the development of peer support groups, for further integration into the community. We will host peer support group events to enable shared learning and best practices, collaboration and resource sharing, and increased visibility of groups. This will expand the support network available for group leaders, reducing isolation and increasing opportunities for personal growth.

This will create a dynamic ecosystem where individual groups and their members can flourish, collectively strengthening the peer support movement as a whole.

Conclusion

Since 2015, Self Help UK, in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support, has been a consistent source of support for individuals living with cancer and their loved ones across Nottinghamshire.

This year, the Beyond Diagnosis Service celebrates ten years of supporting people affected by Cancer. This is a very proud moment for us, particularly when we look back on how far we have come. From our initial model of providing emotional support through a team of volunteers, to becoming a service with nine staff providing a wide range of practical, emotional, and assistive support in close collaboration with the NHS and other voluntary sector services, we have managed to keep up with and adapt to the complex needs in this area.

We're excited to be commemorating a decade of care, compassion, and unwavering support.



Primary Care Network

Enhancing cancer care through holistic support

Self Help UK's Primary Care Network (PCN) Cancer Care Coordination service provides high-quality, comprehensive support to cancer patients within primary care settings.

By working closely with healthcare professionals and external services, our dedicated Cancer Care Coordinators have addressed the wider determinants of health, ensuring a more holistic approach to cancer care.

Key achievements:

- **40 Health Needs Assessments** conducted
- **28 Care Plans** developed
- **175 liaisons** with statutory services on behalf of clients



"Bulwell and Top Valley PCN would like to take this opportunity to mention how happy and satisfied we have been with the service delivery and hard work that has been completed by Ella in her time within the PCN."

PCN 1 – Bulwell and Top Valley

"I would like to bring it to your attention that we as a clinical team discussed Ella and her role at our recent clinical meeting. All of us stated how helpful she is as a colleague, and we wanted this to be fed back to Ella for her portfolio/reflection."

Since Ella has started working at The Practice St Albans, our patients have benefited greatly from her kindness, professionalism and patience. She routinely goes above and beyond for both us as clinicians and the patients, and this doesn't go unnoticed by us as a team. She has turned our patient target numbers around and is a valuable team player who makes all of our jobs that bit easier."

**St Albans Practice,
PCN 1 – Bulwell and Top Valley**

It has been a very challenging year in this service. Internal constraints in the PCN have meant that four out of five of our contracts could not be renewed as staff pursued other opportunities throughout the year. While the PCN's and GP surgeries themselves were very sad to lose this service, they were very satisfied with the outcomes it produced, making the understandable sacrifice of this role to redirect funds to patient safety in challenging times for the health sector.

PCN 8 – Clifton and Meadows have managed to renew the role for 2025/26. We are currently exploring avenues to re-establish our former contracts.

Prehab' Link Workers

Providing holistic support to facilitate recovery after surgery

Self Help UK's Social Prescribing Link Worker role within the Macmillan Beyond Diagnosis Service has played a vital part in supporting cancer patients undergoing prehabilitation at Nottingham City Hospital.

By addressing the wider determinants of health, including emotional well-being and practical needs, we have helped patients improve their physical resilience and facilitate a smoother recovery after surgery.

Key achievements:

- **119 clients supported.**
- **Consistently reduced concern scores on Health Needs Assessments** across physical, practical, emotional, family or relationship, and spiritual concerns measures.

Collaborations and partnerships

Partnering with Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust (NUH) and 'A Better Life' (ABL) continues to be a very positive experience. Through working together, we can collaborate to ensure clients get the full range of their needs met. The weekly meeting means that we are included at the heart of the service, allowing us to influence the care and support our clients receive. We also get incredible support from our partners in the service.

Challenges and lessons learned

Through a difficult period of reduced staffing, we benefitted from adjusting workloads across the team. Now, instead of a single Link Worker for the service, we have improved resilience of the role by splitting the workload between three members of staff. We now filter referrals through the same admin process as our Beyond Diagnosis Service. This has streamlined our workload and improved efficiency within the service.



Learning Centre

Empowering communities through peer support

Self Help UK's Learning Centre resources have equipped individuals and professionals with the knowledge and skills needed to establish and sustain effective support groups, leading to significant improvements in personal well-being and community health.

Key achievements:

- **294 enrolments** on peer support courses and workshops.
- **4,700 people reached** each month across our social media platforms, expanding our digital outreach.
- **New Self Help UK website launched** – www.selfhelp.org.uk – featuring a modern design, improved navigation, and a brand-new peer support group directory.
- **Expanded offer of learning opportunities**, delivering targeted workshops for both professionals and aspiring peer support group leaders.

These initiatives reflect our ongoing commitment to empower individuals and organisations to create, manage, and sustain effective peer support structures.



Sadman Shovon –
Learning Centre Manager

We remained committed to involving our community in meaningful ways. Our Learning Centre attracted 191 new sign-ups, a 150% growth on the same time a year ago, showing clear community interest in developing peer-led initiatives. Many of these sign-ups came directly through new channels, such as our revamped website and proactive social media engagement.

The new peer support group directory was designed based on community feedback, addressing the need for an easier way for individuals to find and join peer-led groups. Group leaders were directly invited and supported to submit their group details, ensuring that the directory is shaped by those it is intended to serve.

The development and delivery of workshops were influenced by conversations with community members, peer supporters, and professionals. Their needs and questions helped shape the content and delivery style of the sessions, ensuring that what we provided was genuinely useful and grounded in real-world challenges.

Our workshops have equipped individuals with the confidence and practical knowledge needed to start or strengthen peer support groups. This builds local resilience and promotes a culture of community-led support, which will have ripple effects well beyond the reporting period.

Learning Centre

Continued...

The steady growth of our social media following and mailing list (with a 4.5% increase in subscriptions) shows that our community is not only growing but becoming increasingly engaged in the conversation about peer support and self-help.

Challenges and lessons learned

The six month extension from the National Lottery for this project has reinforced the importance of digital accessibility and clear, user-friendly communication. The positive reception to the new website demonstrated that even small improvements in functionality and design can have a major impact on user engagement.

We learned that demand for training and guidance on peer support remains strong, both among professionals working in health and wellbeing services, and among community members seeking to set up their own groups. Tailoring our workshops to different audiences helped us meet these distinct needs more effectively.

We recognised the need to remain adaptable in response to staffing changes, ensuring continuity in project delivery even as team members changed.



Conclusion

We plan to continue building our digital offer by developing our online resources and exploring options for virtual peer support workshops and webinars.

We also plan to strengthen our support for peer support group leaders by offering follow-up sessions and resources to help sustain their groups beyond the initial set-up phase.

Internally, we have adjusted our staffing structure to ensure that Learning Centre activities are supported more broadly across the organisation. This will help us avoid disruptions due to staff turnover and enable us to embed Learning Centre work firmly within Self Help UK's wider strategy.



Our partnerships and external influence

Our impact wouldn't be possible without the unwavering support of our partners. Bringing people together, we're making a real difference in the lives of those we serve.

We actively contributed to external networks and conferences, including:

- National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP) International Social Prescribing Conference (London).
- Health Equity Network Conference (Birmingham).
- Population Health Conference (Bradford).

We joined several new networks and took leadership roles:

- Chaired the Nottinghamshire Together VCSE Network.
- Membership of NASP's Social Prescribing Innovation Network.
- Joined Gunnercooke's Inspire Network.
- Remained an active member of the Nottingham ICB's VCSE Alliance.
- Engaged with the new East Midlands Combined County Authority and applied to be VCSE Regional Representative.



Equity, diversity, inclusivity and belonging

We remain committed to embedding Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity and Belonging (EDIB) into every aspect of our work. We continue to integrate 'Belonging' into our new organisational strategy, creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all staff, volunteers and service users.

We have introduced several important developments reflecting our commitment:

- **British Sign Language Level One training** undertaken by ten staff, strengthening our ability to communicate inclusively with colleagues and better serve our Deaf community.
- **Muslim Staff Network** established, building connectivity, exchange and resilience among colleagues. This internal work mirrors our external approach, ensuring the values we promote in the community are reflected within our organisation.
- **New Trustees** from a variety of backgrounds were welcomed onto our Board, bringing diverse experiences and perspectives to our governance.
- **Our Deaf Cancer Support Service** continues to be a flagship example of EDIB in action. Delivered by Deaf people for Deaf people, 86% of those involved identify as Deaf, with 100% fluent in BSL. Through advocacy, training, volunteering opportunities and support groups, we provide tailored and accessible support to individuals impacted by cancer within the Deaf community.
- **52% of our workforce identifies as non-White British**, reflecting the diversity of the communities we serve.
- **We are Disability Confident Committed** and have confirmed our commitment to inclusivity through the Disability Confident employer scheme.

Our ongoing commitment is to embed EDIB not only into service delivery, but also into our recruitment, staff development, partnerships, leadership and governance.



Transparency and accountability

We remain committed to continuously improving our organisation for the benefit of our staff, service users, and wider stakeholders.

This year marked a significant period of development and renewal.

- We launched our refreshed website.
- We signed up to and worked within the policies and procedures of our new Staff Handbook.
- We invested in a community-wide listening exercise to shape our multi-year strategy.

Over fifty stakeholders – including funders, statutory partners, community members, staff, trustees, and peers – contributed to this six month process, which also included the launch of a community-led Social Prescribing Experts Panel. This collective insight is now informing our new Theory of Change and organisational strategy.

Four new trustees were recruited and formally inducted, contributing to the charity's refreshed committee structure. We also reconnected with the charity's founder, Judy Wilson, to reflect on past achievements and discuss the future strategy.

We continued to prioritise staff wellbeing and development.

- We introduced a new Employee Assistance Programme,
- Ten colleagues began British Sign Language (BSL) Level One training, reinforcing our commitment to accessibility and inclusion.



Looking forward, our renewed focus is clear. For anyone interested in improving health and wellbeing, Self Help UK is a community development charity that equips, empowers, and encourages positive change. Our services are shaped by specialist knowledge, lived experience, and a deep-rooted commitment to holistic, community-informed care.

Looking ahead: building on our legacy

As we move beyond our current strategy, we are excited to shape a renewed focus for Self Help UK that builds on over forty-two years of grassroots impact, lived experience, and trusted partnerships.

Our mission remains rooted in empowering individuals and communities through the principles of self-help – but we are evolving.

How you can help

- **Corporate partnerships:** Support our core programmes, or align your business with specific services that resonate with you. Opportunities include event sponsorships, online resource support, or funding community projects.
- **Individual donors:** Fund life-changing services, from cancer support to reducing isolation in marginalised communities. Consider naming rights for new services, project sponsorships, and legacy giving.
- **Charitable foundations:** Develop and pilot innovative programmes, expand successful initiatives, and ensure sustainable growth. Foundations focussed on health, well-being, and social equity will find an ideal partner in Self Help UK.



Guided by our new Theory of Change and shaped by a national listening exercise, our next chapter will place greater emphasis on community-led health and wellbeing, social prescribing, and systems change.

We continue to equip people with the knowledge, confidence and tools they need to take control of their lives – creating a culture of empowerment, connection and resilience.



www.selfhelp.org.uk

21-23 Pelham Road, Nottingham NG5 1AP England

Ian Boyd - Chief Executive Officer

ian.boyd@selfhelp.org.uk

+44(0)115 911 1661

Registered charity number: 1061691

Company number: 03309760