

Mr Hastings and St Leonards

(Hastings and St Leonards Mens Health and Wellbeing Project)

Mr Hastings and St Leonards has been funded for three years, from June 2022, by East Sussex County Council, is hosted by Hastings Voluntary Action and led by local men.

The projects long-term vision is that men living in Hastings and St Leonards are living happier, healthier, and longer lives. They are at the heart of decision making about their lives and thrive in strong, supportive, and well-connected communities, where they can fulfil their potential.



This project has been developed because we know that:

- Life expectancy for men in Hastings and St Leonards is significantly lower than the national average.
- Many initiatives have been delivered across the borough with the intention of improving health outcomes for those most in need.
- Individually, these have made a big difference to people who have had first-hand experience of them. However, this has not led to improved health across the wider population.
- This suggests that no single action, or organisation, can solve this complex issue on its own.

The Project Team, Teresa Flower (Project Manager) and Jacy Kilvert (Community Development Worker), were appointed autumn 2022 to mobilise, and encourage collaboration between:

- **Male residents** who have lived experience of needing and / or accessing support around the wider determinants of their health and want to be involved in improving outcomes for men in their communities; and
- **Services and community groups** which either seek to support men around the wider determinants of their health or have responsibility for other health assets (physical and environmental), that impact on health and wellbeing for men.

For information contact the Project Team:

Teresa Flower, Project Manager. Email:

teresa@hastingsvoluntaryaction.org.uk

Jacy Kilvert, Community Development Worker. Email:

jacy@hastingsvoluntaryaction.org.uk

Visit the HVA Project Webpage: <https://tinyurl.com/hvamenshealth>

Mr Hastings and St Leonards Linktree: <https://linktr.ee/mrhsl> or scan this QR code.



Step back, be brave and trust the process.



Mr Hastings and St Leonards Quarterly Report: Mr Hastings and St Leonards Learning Event 2024.



Introduction.

We have slightly delayed this report's production to align with the presentation of **Apteligen's Interim Learning and Evaluation Report at the Mr Hastings and St Leonards 2024 Learning Event** held at Muriel Matters House in Hastings on 23rd October.

The Learning Event was an opportunity to reflect on the impact, challenges, opportunities and learning to date. It highlighted the role local men are taking in leading the movement and creating momentum, through their passion, creativity, commitment and inspiration. It also recognised the support and increasing engagement of partners across the system.

The event was attended by 37 representatives from across sectors. Many others were unable to join us on the day but registered interest in the future of the mens movement, and mens health and wellbeing across the region.

Steve Manwaring (HVA Director) welcomed everyone to the event and reflected on his experience of Mr Hastings and St Leonards:

“HVA is delighted to have Mr Hastings and St Leonards as one of our projects, its energy and creativity never ceases to inspire and its movement onto the national stage (with the Baton of Hope) is well deserved. I also want to pay tribute to the work of Teresa and Jacy who have delivered authentic Asset Based Community Development in developing this work. This requires commitment (and bravery), and we are proud of them both”



Apteligen Mr Hastings and St Leonards would like to thank the Apteligen team, John, James and Mark, who are working with other us to capture and share learning. The Apteligen website can be viewed here: <https://www.apteligen.co.uk/>

Step back, be brave and trust the process.

A key part of the afternoon was John from Apteligen, presenting key findings from their Interim Evaluation and Learning Report, along with an amended Mr Hastings and St Leonards Theory of Change (TOC).

Both documents can be viewed on the Mr Hastings and St Leonards HVA project page where the Apteligen Full Report, and the slide pack from Mr Hastings and St Leonards Learning Event, will also be made available: <https://hastingsvoluntaryaction.org.uk/project/mr-hastings-and-st-leonards>

In this report we are not repeating Apteligen's reflections but focussing on a brief overview of what was shared by the Mr Hastings and St Leonards HVA Team, and men leading the movement in Hastings and St Leonards. This includes:

1. Local Men Leading the Way
2. Impact Across the System
3. Legacy and Sustainability
4. Looking to the Future

1. Local Men Leading the Way

The HVA Team (Teresa and Jacy) shared an introductory overview of some key achievements and learning since the October 2023 Learning Event. This was supported throughout by voice notes and film clips provided by the men driving the movements development and sustainability.

The team (Tersea and Jacy) acknowledged that they have been supported throughout by both Hastings Voluntary Action who host the initiative, and their commissioners, East Sussex County Council Public Health, to stay true to the Asset Based Community Development approach.

They stressed that they recognised that this wasn't always easy and had meant having some challenging conversations along the way.

This was possible due to professional relationships built on trust and honesty, where it was safe to explore both successes and challenging situations and learn from both.

They also stressed the commitment, bravery and passion of the men that have contributed to the journey so far, thanking them for their contributions to the learning event either in person or virtually.

Key achievements highlighted in the presentation included:

- The mens social media platforms, Podcasts and Men Don't Talk film which can be accessed via their Linktree landing page: <https://linktr.ee/mrhl>
- The fortnightly Grumpy Mens Club hosted by the Grumpy Cook Hastings.
- The Monologues of Men performance and forthcoming film.

Step back, be brave and trust the process.



- The imminent launch of 'Talk Club' <https://talkclub.org/> a model the men hope to roll out to other groups across Hastings and St Leonards,
- The Mobile Mens Room on tour, visiting local events and service provision, with the sofa becoming a symbol of a safe space for men to chat.



Mr Hastings and St Leonards is working closely with individual men, and local mens groups, following their energy, interests and passions to reach out to men within the community. This is just a sample of Mr Hastings and St Leonards activity.

Appendix 1 offers more examples of Mr Hastings and St Leonards activity.



Step back, be brave and trust the process.

Dan, Lee and Shreyans joined us at the Learning Event to share their experiences and aspirations. They spoke about how they met at a Mr Hastings and St Leonards event which enhanced their passion for mens health and wellbeing.

They have been collaborating and delivering activities for men locally such as Mens **Wellness Through Music** and **Mens Wellbeing Retreats**.

Event participants experienced a sample of the workshops delivered, watched a short film clip and listened to a recording from a man who had taken part in workshops.



Men's Wellness Through Music

A five week exploration of men's experiences through:

- Singing
- Drumming
- Songwriting
- Listening

Wednesday Evenings 7-9 PM
5 Sessions Starting Aug 14th
Venue: Afri-Co-Lab 13 Marine Court TN39 6DX

Contact:
Shreyans 07724 316 117
Dan 07949 634 781



Please thank them (Mr Hastings and St Leonards CIC) from us and when we have an opportunity, we will thank them personally 😊

I'm really touched that they would consider helping us, it's a beautiful thing. If we are going to do anything as men, I believe we need to do it together and move away from our conditioning or competition.

Please express my gratitude 🙏



MEN'S WELL BEING RETREAT

Join us in nature to explore practical tools to support well being. Activities incl: Qi Gong, meditation, art, drumming a fireside sharing circle.

Contact Dan 07949634781 or Lee 07519944969

WWW.ROOTSOFRETURN.ORG



Step back, be brave and trust the process.

2. Impact across the System.

The **Mr Hastings and St Leonards brand** was codesigned by local men and launched in June 2023. It is now recognised widely and has enabled the movement to reach out within the community, and across the system.

Continuing to **raise the profile of the Mr Hastings and St Leonard's brand locally, regionally and nationally** is important in increasing awareness and engagement around mens health and wellbeing. It is also key to inspiring others to explore further our Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach to delivery and service development. More information about ABCD can be found here: <https://www.nurturedevelopment.org/asset-based-community-development/>

Mr Hastings and St Leonards Steering Group has a diverse membership from across sectors with a quarterly online meeting. There are 48 members on the mailing list from across sectors and with a wide range of roles including men leading local community groups and activities.

All receive reports, circulate information on behalf of Mr Hastings and St Leonards, and share their knowledge, experience and skills. Steering group members are regularly approached for support, information, advice, and connections. They will play an important role in increasing impact across the system, and supporting the mens movement, moving forward.

The Hastings and St Leonards Mens Health and Wellbeing Forum meets quarterly and brings together local men, and practitioners who work with men. The forum has a cross-cutting role in developing the mens movement, encouraging collaboration and the sharing of skills and experience, between local men, local community groups that engage with men, and service provision across the system. Maintaining the forum is key to future collaboration across the system and sustainability of the movement.

This year Mr Hastings and St Leonards has been highlighted in:

- **Creativity for Healthier Lives – The East Sussex Director of Public Health Annual Report:** [Annual Public Health Report 2023/24 - Creativity for Healthier Lives | \(eastsussexjsna.org.uk\)](#)
- **Local Government Association Report Mens Health:**
[Men's health: The lives of men in our communities | Local Government Association](#)
[East Sussex: Energising local groups and people to address mental health | Local Government Association](#)
- Mr Hastings and St Leonards also submitted evidence to the **UK Parliament Select Inquiry into Mens Health**



Alongside participating in many local events, networks, partnership groups and team meetings, Mr Hastings and St Leonards has been asked to present at a number of regional and national events.

Step back, be brave and trust the process.

This has included:

- **The Blackpool Learning Exchange - Mobilising Community Assets in Coastal Communities: what happens next,**
- **Sussex Co-Producing Co-Production - The Sequel, and**
- **Coastal Community and Creative Health Community Discussion Forum.**



This is only a small selection of Mr Hastings and St Leonards activity over the last year.

Appendix 1 offers more detail around networks, events, partnerships and meetings we have contributed to while **appendix 2** is a summary of the types of activity undertaken by Mr Hastings and St Leonards and the impact this has within the community and across the system

3. Legacy and Sustainability

An initial three-year funding period for Mr Hastings and St Leonards development comes to an end in June 2025. Sustainability moving forward is central to the movements planning for the future at this time.

A core group of men have been supported to form a **Community Interest Company (CIC) – Mens Room Hastings and St Leonards (15977181)** They have already been successful in securing their first funding to develop their website.

Mens Wellness Through Music will be the first local mens project to seek funding for future activity under the umbrella of the newly formed CIC.

Mr Hastings and St Leonards would like to take this opportunity to thank **Hastings Voluntary Action** <https://hastingsvoluntaryaction.org.uk/> and **Making it Happen** <https://making-it-happen.org.uk/> for their support throughout the movements development.

Mr Hastings and St Leonards have been successful in their application to host the **Baton of Hope Tour 2025** . This is an amazing opportunity to build on the collaborative action around mens health and wellbeing that has been nurtured over the first two years of this initiative.

Step back, be brave and trust the process.

The bid highlighted the wealth of local creativity and passion and the opportunities for collaboration across the vibrant voluntary and community sector alongside public and business sector partners.

The Baton of Hope is on a mission to change society's approach to suicide and save lives conceived by two dads who had both lost their sons to suicide

<https://batonofhopeuk.org/the-baton/>



The planning, delivery and legacy of the Baton of Hope will make a significant impact on Mr Hastings and St Leonards future sustainability.

We are already discussing collaborations, awareness raising and funding opportunities, including exploring the possibility of maintaining community development worker support.

A community launch event is planned for the afternoon of 19th November 2024 at Central Hall in Hastings. For more information and to register to attend visit the HVA events page:

<https://hastingsvoluntaryaction.org.uk/events>

4. Looking to the future.

Mr Hastings and St Leonards speak a lot about the 'ripple' the movement is having across the community and system that surrounds local men, their friends and families. Ripple mapping is a method for capturing connections and the wider impacts of delivery, not always obvious through traditional approaches to evaluation.

Over the coming months this is an approach we will be exploring further with John and Mark from Apteligen.

Towards the end the learning event we encouraged participants to take part in a light touch ripple mapping exercise to encourage conversation and **capture some of the ripple in the room**. Three questions were shared to start the conversation:

- What brought you here today?
- What new connections have you made through Mr Hastings and St Leonards?
- How have these connections impacted on you or your work?



The ripples that were shared will contribute to our ongoing evaluation and learning which will be shared widely. Event feedback gathered on the day is included as Appendix 3. Thank you to everyone who contributed and shared your reflections on Mr Hastings and St Leonards.

Step back, be brave and trust the process.

The final part of the event was a call to action.

Opportunities were shared to get involved:

- **International Men's Day - Baton of Hope 2025 Launch: 19 November, Central Hall (2- 5pm)**
- **Mens Film Night: 20 November, Stade Hall (Evening)**
- **Baton of Hope Tour 2025: Be part of the journey.
The Baton tour visits Hastings on 23 September**
- **Grumpy Men's Club: 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month 6-8pm at Grumpy Cook Hastings**
- **Stade Hall (Talk Club, Baton planning and more) Thursday Evenings 6 -8 pm**
- **Men's Health and Wellbeing Forums – Quarterly meetings (Dates TBC)**
- **Connect with the men via social media, watch films and more: <https://linktr.ee/mrhsi>**
- **Book events on HVA events Page: <https://hastingsvoluntaryaction.org.uk/events>**
- **Read reports and view opportunities on the HVA project webpage: <https://tinyurl.com/hvamenshealth>**

The journey has only just begun.

Join the conversation at home, in the workplace and in the community.

Get involved in Baton of Hope 2025.

Make a difference to the future of mens health and wellbeing in

Hastings and St Leonards.

Mr Hastings and St Leonards would like to thank everyone who has been part of the journey so far and we are looking forward to working with many more of you over the coming year.

Step back, be brave and trust the process.

Appendix 1: Mr Hastings and St Leonards Activity (Produced October 2024)

Mr Hastings and St Leonards has embedded itself in the local community through collaborating with established local groups, and service providers, and participating in a wide range of community events and activities. Over the last year this has included:

- Hastings Pride
- Walking the Fish Festival
- Head on Board Skate Jam
- Hastings Heart Christmas Fayre
- East Sussex Wellbeing at Work Gold Awards Event
- Let's Talk Men's Health event hosted by the East Sussex Library Service.
- Salvation Army Employability and Community Fair,
- Mental Health Awareness Week Musical extravaganza
- St Michaels Hospice Bereavement Event
- East Sussex Recovery Alliance (ESRA) Celebration

Mr Hastings and St Leonards have developed and delivered a number of events and activities including:

- The premiere of Men Don't Talk? A film made by men involved in the movement who hosted the filming and shared their stories.
- Mr Hastings and St Leonards Awareness Day
- Monologues of Men. Monologues written by local men and then performed at the Stables Theatre.
- Mr Hastings and St Leonards Celebration event in June 2024 planned to align with Mens Health Week.
- Mobile Mens Room on tour
- Grumpy Mens Club drop-in (twice a month), hosted by The Grumpy Cook Café.
- Hastings and St Leonards Mens Health and Wellbeing Forum (quarterly) bringing together groups and services engaging with me across Hastings and St Leonards to promote and encourage local collaboration.

Mr Hastings and St Leonards Team are also active members of a number of local networks, partnership groups and discussion forums including:

- The Active Hastings Partnership
- Hastings Community Network
- VCSE Mental Health Network
- Hastings Youth Partnership
- Mental Health Action Group
- Mens Mental Health Community of Interest
- Coastal Communities and Creative Health Discussion Forum

Step back, be brave and trust the process.

Mr Hastings and St Leonards Steering group membership and support network has representation from across the system including:

- East Sussex County Council Adult Social Care, Public Health Commissioners and Officers from Drug and Alcohol Services, Mental Health, ESTAR, External Funding.
- Hastings Borough Council Community Safety, Housing and Active Hastings Teams.
- East Sussex Integrated Health Care
- St Micheals Hospice, A Band of Brothers, Project Rewild, Veterans Hub, Possibility People, Seaview, Mens Network, Change, Grow, Live (CGL), Hastings and Rother Rainbow Alliance, Roots of Return, Changing Futures and DWP.

Mr Hastings and St Leonards have delivered presentations and workshops in a range of settings across the system including:

- The Safer Hastings Joint Action Group, East Sussex Communications and Engagement Steering Group, East Sussex County Council Public Health Lunch and learn, East Sussex Wellbeing at Work Webinar, East Sussex County Council Adult Social Care Team, Coproducing Coproduction event.
- The team also presented at a Coastal Communities knowledge Exchange event in Blackpool.

Appendix 2: Mr Hastings and St Leonards Areas of Activity and Impact.

Activity	Collaboration	Outreach, awareness raising, sharing learning	Capacity Building	Sustainability and legacy	Influencing the system
Mens Forum quarterly meetings (ongoing)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Branding Codesign workshops (6 workshops 2023)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Branded products (ongoing)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Initial champions workshops (5 workshops 2023)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Systems thinking workshops (2023)	✓	✓			✓
Year 1 and Year 2 Celebration Events (2023 and 2024)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Hosted Conversations (7 workshops 2023)	✓	✓	✓		✓
Year 1 and Year 2 Learning Event (2023 and 2024)	✓	✓	✓		✓
Movember Campaign support (2023 and 2024)	✓	✓			
Let's Talk Mens Health - Collaboration with Hastings Library (2024)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Men Don't Talk? Film making and screening (2023 - 2024)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hastings United Football Club Campaign (2024)		✓	✓		
Take Action Man film screening support (2024)	✓	✓		✓	
The Monologues of men workshops, film of journey, performance (2024)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Support local men to deliver activities to improve mens health and wellbeing within the community (ongoing)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Walking the Fish (workshops and parade 2024)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Mobile Mens Room set up and tour (2024)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Training and development - capacity building (ongoing)		✓	✓	✓	
Reward and recognition for men involved in movement (ongoing)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Equipment for podcasting (2023/24)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Subscriptions for social media platforms and content production etc. (ongoing)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Events: national, regional and local (ongoing)	✓	✓		✓	✓

Step back, be brave and trust the process.

Appendix 3: Reflections from Feedback Forms

1. How is Mr Hastings and St Leonards making a difference in the lives of local men?

- Getting them to open up be confident
- I work countywide so don't know directly but the links to making it happen groups have been so valuable.
- Massive impact and inspirational to others
- Giving men the opportunity to talk openly. Opening the door to other groups and organisations for men.
- Raising awareness, connecting people and inspiring men to get involved.
- Giving men a platform, opportunity and spaces to be open and address things that matter to them.
- They are offering a safe and nurturing space
- Impressed by the creation of the Grumpy Mens Club and clearly a more expansive inclusive offer for men gradually taking place by the enthusiasm and hard work of those involved.
- By creating safe spaces for men to connect and experience intimacy and be vulnerable
- By encouraging authentic conversation and Mental support ... men
- Raising awareness of mens mental health and importance of talking

2. How can we build on the momentum already achieved ?

- Advertising more – be everywhere
- Continue to share learning across ABCD programmes and join forces to bang the drum about key learning there.
- Keep coproducing with people with lived experience
- Take the physical health element forward through the Macmillan project and use the approaches in out work.
- Keep building and keep growing
- Continue to promote events and opportunities from men to come together and connect
- Continue to do what you do! Listen, energise, empower
- Keep connecting with partners and group that also reach men
- Keep encouraging small positive activities
- Keep on doing more of the same
- I think by keeping on talking to more men and people in the community and performances. Maybe having the couch on the promenade on a sunny day along with a group of Mr H&SL Ambassadors
- Create spaces in the community where men can be authentic based around different identities.
- Keep people talking

3. What is your vision for the future of Mr Hastings and St Leonards?

- That it won't be needed anymore
- ABCD practice is embedded in future programmes
- Build and grow to a global movement
- To be a permanent group/project for men in the area
- Form a movement in the town/social ,media movement also
- To see a movement and cultural shift meaning it is 'ok' for men to talk , be open and transparent
- To continue growing
- Becoming a model for replication throughout the county
- A cradle of creativity and community where men, women and people of all genders really.
- Opening up even more and connecting with the other mens communities . We all rise together.
- Sustainable. People running it for themselves.

Step back, be brave and trust the process.

4. Please tell us here if you have any further comments about this event, the project, or men's health and wellbeing in Hastings and St Leonards.

- Really informative. Contacts made. Points discussed.
- Best example of co production in Sussex MH services with everything driven by the ,men delivering the activities.
- Id like to sync someone up with my step daughter as she has great ideas about getting people to connect – remind me !!
- Informative, inspiring and thought provoking. Has provided food for thought for projects and events we are considering
- Event was brill – showing authentic experience
- I feel there has been a marked progression about influence of the group and am happy to help either in a personal or professional capacity.
- I think it's amazing how much is being done already and I'm looking forward to the baton of hope. It is really, really inspiring, especially because as trying to administrate a project myself I know it can be quite challenging at times 😊
- So inspiring to hear from people. Honest. Bravo.

Step back, be brave and trust the process.