

Mr Hastings and St Leonards Quarterly Report

Mr Hastings and St Leonards has been funded for three years, from June 2022, by East Sussex County Council. It 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.

In this report we will share a brief update on progress this quarter. The report is presented using headings and actions from the projects agreed year 2 delivery plan.

- **Development of Mens Movement (Mr Hastings and St Leonards).**
- **Influencing Systems Change.**
- **Enhancing Project Impact and Learning.**

For information contact the Project Team:

Teresa Flower, Project Manager (HVA) Email: teresa@hastingsvoluntaryaction.org.uk

Jacy Kilvert, Community Development Worker (HVA) Email: jacy@hastingsvoluntaryaction.org.uk

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

Mr Hastings and St Leonards Linktree landing page: <https://linktr.ee/mrhl>



Step Back, be Brave and Trust the Process.

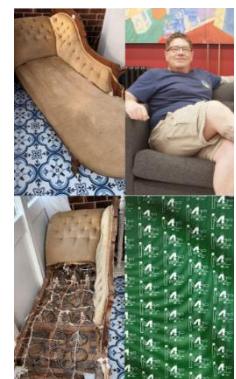
Quarterly Report (October to December 2023)

Development of Mens Movement (Mr Hastings and St Leonards)

- 1) Community engagement and awareness raising.
- 2) Actions and collaborations identified, designed, and led by local men .
- 3) Legacy and Sustainability of 'what works' that can continue beyond the life of this project.

Since the Men's Celebration Event in June 2023, and Year 1 Learning Event in October 2023, local men have been making connections, building relationships and spreading the word. They have developed a number of key initiatives which include:

- A Mr Hastings and St Leonards **Linktree landing page** <https://linktr.ee/mrhsi> which will link to Mr Hastings and St Leonards social media platforms. All developed by men from the first cohort of Champions and the initial Branding Team.
- Regular **Podcasts** are being hosted by Travis and Maz. Three have been shared to date.
- An **Infomercial** has been produced by a local film maker Francis Saunders. This will be premiered in the new year. It was filmed at a local venue, Goodman's Barbers, attracting 18 men from the community to take part and share their experiences.
- A Mr Hastings and St Leonards **Facebook page** has been developed and has 139 followers.
- The men hosted **presentations** at the project's Year 1 Learning Event, Mind Hastings and St Leonards Mens Mental Health Project Celebration Event, and Hastings Voluntary Action AGM.
- The core group of men ran a stand at the Hastings Heart Christmas Fayre and **contributed** to the Movember campaign locally.
- **St Micheals Mens Forum** has been developed by one of the Men's Champions bringing together men who work/volunteer with the hospice.
- Developing a '**Mobile Mens Room**' that will go on tour in 2024. A sofa on wheels is currently being upcycled, and portable 'murals' are being developed which will include infographics and panoramic views of Hastings and St Leonards. This will be used to generate conversations and make connections.



The **men are sharing information within the community** on a daily basis. Creating a ripple effect which is resulting in more conversations, and raised awareness, around mens health and wellbeing.

The **project team continue to support this core group of local men** to increase their reach and build capacity by:

- responding to opportunities identified by local men,
- making connections between local groups and partner organisations,
- providing resources, equipment, and training to enable the men to achieve their ambitions,
- valuing the skills and experience local men bring,
- accessing information and support around options for sustainability of Mr Hastings and St Leonards and
- providing frameworks, and sharing good practice, to ensure Mr Hastings and St Leonards is built on strong, safe, and collaborative foundations.

Step Back, be Brave and Trust the Process.

While out in the community, the project team **hear and see the impact** that Mr Hastings and St Leonards is already having. The brand is beginning to be recognised and local men, and wider stakeholders have seen their podcasts or Facebook posts or have met men involved in the project first hand. This has resulted in contact from the wider community for information about Mr Hastings and St Leonards and local support.

Local men have approached the project team with ideas for initiatives which they have developed based on their own professional experience, lived experience, or areas of shared interest. The team offer support and ensure the men are connected with other local men and wider partners, who can offer expertise and resources moving forward.

Influencing Systems Change

- 1) Stakeholder engagement, and awareness raising across the system.
- 2) Embedding collaboration across voluntary, community and public sectors to improve mens health and wellbeing.
- 3) Encouraging conversations, and mens champions, within organisations.
- 4) Enable sharing of learning between local men and the system that impacts on their lives.

The project team continue to take every opportunity to reach out to stakeholders across the system through team meetings, presentations, networking, meetings, events, and workshops.

This quarter this has included presenting to **East Sussex County Council Public Health Lunch and Learn** meeting, delivering a workshop alongside Maz and Travis at the **HVA AGM**, presenting at a **Knowledge Exchange** event held in Blackpool (infographic of the projects presentation is included on the right) and speaking at the **Hastings Community Network Open Mic event**. When local men are unable to join the team a short clip from the first 'Mr Hastings and St Leonards Podcast' is shown, ensuring they are always part of the conversation.



The projects **Year 1 Learning Event**, held in October 2023, was a key moment for connecting across the system, and sharing learning to influence change. 62 participants registered on the event and 40 attended on the day. All received a copy of the learning report, published Sept 2023, available on the project's webpage.

Conversations generated by this networking, are enabling the project team to identify examples of **collaboration and best practice across the system**. These will be collated as **case studies**, highlighting how small changes to delivery, collaborative action, and listening to the lived experience of local men in the community, can be beneficial to all. Improving mens experience of current services, their health and wellbeing, and enabling services across the system to make best use of limited resources to achieve shared goals. Insight is also evidencing the need to shift resources into alternative health and wellbeing approaches already valued, and accessed, by many men within the community.

A written submission was made to **The Health and Social Care Committee's Inquiry into Men's Health** and was published in December 2023 on the committee's [website](#). It is hoped that this will lead to a national Mens Health Strategy in 2024. Available of the project webpage.

Step Back, be Brave and Trust the Process.

The **Mens Health and Wellbeing Forum** continues to meet, bringing together local groups and organisation working with men, or wishing to increase their reach. It is noticeable that more men are now joining these meetings and leading the agenda.

The project team have contributed to **North and South Health Inequalities** research led by Vic McGowen from Newcastle University who has been interviewing people across Hartlepool, Blackpool, Hastings, and Torbay. Return visits will happen in the new year. Collaborative working will lead to the development of creative materials that will highlight what's needed in these towns to make them even better places to live.

Enhancing Project Impact and Learning

- 1) Oversight and Governance
- 2) Communication (with local men and across the system)
- 3) Evaluation and Learning (insight)

The project has an **informal governance structure** with wide representation on the project steering group from across public, voluntary and community sector groups and organisations. The steering group mailing list extends to 34 members who receive all project reports and updates, can be contacted for advice and support, and have the option of attending quarterly steering group meetings.

Work is currently underway to explore opportunities to build **stronger links between programmes and projects** using a similar approach to Mr Hastings and St Leonards. This includes regular meetings with the Making it Happen Programme lead <https://making-it-happen.org.uk/> This will ensure that learning and opportunities for collaboration are optimised moving forward.

Mr Hastings and St Leonards **social media posts and podcasts are** reaching out to local men and wider stakeholders on a daily basis. Alongside this, the project team are ensuring the **HVA project webpage, and HVA newsletter**, shares regular updates of project opportunities and wider community activity . Project funding has provided resources to enable podcasts to be produced and guidance is in place regarding safe practice.

Mr Hastings and St Leonards **merchandise** is being purchased to increase awareness of the project and encourage conversation around mens health and wellbeing. The project will continue to **identify and support innovative methods** of communicating key issues and connecting with men across Hastings and St Leonards.

The project has worked closely with Mind Hastings Men's Mental Health Project which ended December 2023. As a legacy of this project the **Padlet** (online post it wall) is now being hosted by Mr Hastings and St Leonards. The **Mr Hastings and St Leonards Padlet** will be made easily accessible across a wide range of platforms.

The projects **Year 1 Learning Event** and report, alongside the **wide range of events, meetings and workshops** undertaken by the team, showcase the projects **transparent approach to sharing learning and encouraging collaborative action**.

In addition to **Lester Colman's Research** report produced in August 2023 (available on the project webpage), this quarter he has



Step Back, be Brave and Trust the Process.

spoken with five men who were part of the initial core group who are helping to shape and lead Mr Hastings and St Leonards. This will inform the engagement and support of men wishing to get involved in the project moving forward.

Apteligen, the projects evaluation and learning partners, have been working closely with Mr Hastings and St Leonards over this quarter. Their Learning Report highlights how their work is evolving to engage current mens champions, wider stakeholders and, in the new year, peer researchers in the learning process.

Next Steps

An **awareness day** for local men, interested in getting involved in Mr Hastings and St Leonards, will be hosted in the new year.

A **range of opportunities** already available will be highlighted to spark interest. New ideas and approaches will be encouraged, and local business engaged in the projects journey whenever possible. The team will continue supporting new **'men led' initiatives**, connecting them with other like-minded projects, resourcing opportunities, and areas or expertise locally.

The project team will **increase their community engagement activity**, seeking out men who are less often heard, encouraging them to value, and share, their lived experience.

This may include men from the fishing community, homeless or disenfranchised men, asylum seekers and refugees, young men, older men, fathers, veterans, and substance misuse. Neighbourhoods that the team have been approached to engage with include Hollington and Broomgrove.

Early conversations will be instigated around sustainability of Mr Hastings and St Leonards, and project legacy, beyond the 3-year East Sussex County Council funding which is due to end in June 2025. This will include exploration, with the men leading the project, of the most appropriate legal structure for Mr Hastings and St Leonards moving forward. Capacity building, personal and professional development opportunities, will be identified, enabling men lead Mr Hastings and St Leonards moving forward.

Some of the key events for the next quarter (January – March 2024) are highlighted below:		
Date:	Opportunity:	Notes:
January 9 th	Mens Health and Wellbeing Forum held at the White Rock Hotel.	It has been suggested that future forums are hosted by community groups and are based around a taste of that project's delivery. It will offer the opportunity for attendance in the evening which has to date not been tested.
January 26 th	Peer researchers training. Hosted conversation.	Apteligen will be spending the day in Hastings to meet and train peer researchers and engage with local stakeholders
January/February	Infomercial premiere	Men involved in the filming, their friends and families, alongside local stakeholders, will be invited to this special, celebratory event, at a local venue.
February 7th	Let's Talk Mens Health in collaboration with Hastings Library Service.	This event has been rescheduled from November 2023 due to a severe weather warning. Mr Hastings and St Leonards members will be presenting on the day.
February 27 th	Mr Hastings and St Leonards Awareness/ Introduction day	The project team will host a conversational event. This will share opportunities and support already available through the project, wider partners, and community.
Spring 2024	Mobile Men's Room tour	Mr Hastings and St Leonards will commence the inaugural Mobile Mens Room tour. Venues and dates will be widely

Step Back, be Brave and Trust the Process.

		circulated tapping into venues and events that are likely to attract local men.
March (TBC)	Activity based 'Mens Forum'	Host agency to be confirmed, but this will be the first of a new style of delivery for the Mens Health and Wellbeing Forum which aims to encourage participation from more community based mens projects.

Step Back, be Brave and Trust the Process.