



The role of CLEAR in the Who Dares Works Project End of Project Evaluation

1. Introduction

Led and managed by Active Plus, Who Dares Works (WDW) was supported with investment from the **National Lottery Community Fund** and the **European Social Fund**. WDW was originally planned for the period from April 2017 to December 2019 and the project was subsequently extended until December 2022. CLEAR was a partner in the Who Dares Works project throughout its lifetime. Further information is available here [pdf Who Dares Works web page 2 CLEAR \(958 KB\)](#)

Background - Prior to the development of the Who Dares Works project both CLEAR and CRASAC were both part of the Who Dares Alliance, a collection of charities and social enterprises who were collaborating to make the impact of their activities greater in combination than it would otherwise be in isolation. This was in recognition that the separate organisations with their own specialities were often supporting the same participants and there would be greater effectiveness if there was more join up in delivery. The Alliance drew on many years of experience of previous 'back to work' programmes – where these worked, where they commonly fell down and why. The principles were about moving away from working in silo's of end-to-end provision to focusing on a partnership of specialisms, with each organisation working to their strengths and trusting and supporting others to help individuals to take the next steps.

The National Lottery Community Fund's Building Better Opportunities programme, which used ESF monies, was the first big opportunity to work together on a formal project. The majority of Alliance members participated, and Active Plus were selected as the Lead Partner.

2. Role of CLEAR in Who Dares Works

CLEAR was a specialist support partner (partners who helped participants tackle specific barriers in their journeys into work or training / education) for **Who Dares Works**, helping people where trauma, most commonly trauma experienced in childhood, was a barrier to finding and keeping work or accessing training and other support. Trauma was often related to all forms of abuse, violence and events such as road traffic accidents, fire and traumatic bereavement. CLEAR provided support through EMDR therapy, trauma-focused CBT, person-centred counselling and psycho-education support.

This role was written in to the Who Dares Works Partnership Agreement (2017) for both CLEAR and CRASAC –

Cornwall Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist support for male and female survivors of abuse • Work related activity in advice work
CLEAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psycho-education support for parents/carers with children experiencing trauma where the child's needs/behaviour is preventing the parent/carer from accessing work related opportunities. • Work related activity in administration • Domestic and sexual abuse awareness sessions

Subsequently CLEAR and CRASAC amalgamated and continued to deliver the contracted services for the project.

CLEAR's delivery within Who Dares Works

The initial ask of CLEAR was for 10 sessions of support (counselling / therapy as needed) although this was extended according to clinical need and where agreed by the project.

Each participant was referred by their Who Dares Works Mentor, where trauma and abuse was identified as a factor in the participant's story. Ultimately, the decision regarding the appropriateness of therapy rested with CLEAR. The reasons for referral were varied, sometimes very specific and sometimes quite general. They were rarely work-related, but being in work could be a triggering factor, for example:

[Participant's] last job was a 'hostile environment'. [Participant] reports that it is very similar to being in an abusive relationship and being at work reminded her of being around her husband, triggering trauma responses.

In each case the participant was assessed by qualified clinical staff from CLEAR to assess their appropriateness and readiness for counselling / therapy and the type of counselling / therapy most appropriate for the project participant. The availability of flexible extensions according to clinical need worked well therapeutically e.g. EMDR is generally a shorter, more focused therapy whereas person-centred counselling is more non-directive and longer by design.

Worklessness and Trauma

Typically, WDW participants experienced a wide range of trauma, sometimes single events but more commonly repeated events stemming from childhood. WDW provided participants with straightforward and swift access to therapy and counselling which they would have struggled to access through more traditional routes of community mental health teams and other NHS services.

“Who Dares Works clients were typically very, very complex, much more than a typical CLEAR client – for example multiple repeated traumas including, childhood neglect, sexual abuse and witness to homicide and suicide”

CLEAR Adult Clinical Lead

Two additional issues arose:

- In general, there was a greater drop out rate of participants receiving support from CLEAR, potentially due the nature and complexity of the traumas experienced: and
- A lack understanding amongst some WDW mentors about the nature of different types of counselling and therapy. For example, some thought that EMDR was the answer to everything and it was left to CLEAR to explain that other forms of therapy were more appropriate in individual cases.

To help to mitigate the above, CLEAR introduced an additional WDW referral form to gather more information about the participant and made the referral more formal.

CLEAR counsellors also valued the additional support present for participants through WDW, most importantly from the WDW mentors who provided ongoing stabilisation support that in many cases made the difference between a participant being in the right place to be ‘ready for therapy’. In addition, the ability to easily access support for other things that arose during counselling/therapy sessions such as money worries, loneliness/isolation ensured the best possible chances for participants to make positive progress.

3. Outputs, Results and Impact

A total of 176 participants in the Who Dares Works project received support from CLEAR.

- 36% male
- 63% female
- 1% transgender.

This is a higher % of men receiving support than is typical for CLEAR e.g. in May 2023 CLEAR had 284 adults clients participating in therapy, 16% were men.

Results

118 individuals supported by CLEAR (67%) gained a result on leaving WDW;

- 75 people moved into education or training (overall project target 14%)
- 21 people moved into work (overall project target 14%)
- 58 people who had been economically inactive moved into job search and were classified as unemployed.

Outcomes

In addition to formal results, WDW had a number of outcomes that measured the difference that WDW support had made. For support from CLEAR, these were gathered on form WDW04 completed at final session of support. The table below illustrates these outcomes. Sample size 84 (48%)

Improved Wellbeing	Increased Comms Skills	Better at Problem Solving	More Motivated	More Confident	Increased Chance of Getting a Job	Increased mental health and wellbeing
Yes	71	66	77	75	43	80
No	1	3	3	6	4	4
N/A	12	15	4	3	37	0

This illustrates the overwhelmingly positive wellbeing outcomes for participants supported by CLEAR, and with 51% identifying the support as increasing their chances of getting a job, a good reflection of how far the participants felt that they had come following support from CLEAR.

CLEAR Clinical Outcomes

In addition to the project feedback Who Dares Works participants supported by CLEAR were also asked to complete Warwick-Edinburgh wellbeing scores. The CLEAR Adult Service routinely uses these in their short form (SWEMWBS)¹ which was developed to enable the measuring of mental wellbeing in the general population and the evaluation of projects, programmes and policies with the aim of improving mental wellbeing.

Clients are asked to complete this measure on assessment and at each session throughout the counselling intervention; the routine measures are voluntary and the choice to complete these is made each session. CLEAR is then able to measure pre- and post-counselling mental wellbeing both to examine differences at the individual level and compare outcomes to those reported in the community as a whole.

On analysis, the pre and post-counselling scores based on the 10 sessions counselling model showed improvements in wellbeing which were statistically significant ($t = -3.56$, $p = 0.00$, $n = 39$). The outcomes for the 10 session counselling model, $M = 21.39$, $SD = 5.35$ are within reach and comparable to the SWEMWBS scores from the 2011 Health Survey where the mean mental wellbeing scores of the community as whole were reported as $M = 23.61$, $SD = 3.9$.

Further, the pre and post-counselling scores where an extension of counselling sessions occurred, for example, based on 15 sessions showed significant difference and improvements in mental wellbeing ($t = -3.71$, $p = 0.00$, $n = 25$) and when looking at the pre and post-counselling scores based on 20 sessions ($t = -4.44$, $p = 0.00$, $n = 17$). It is important to note that the outcomes found at both 15 and 20 sessions are based on a smaller number of clients $n = 25$ and $n = 17$ where an extension of sessions has been undertaken.

This clinical analysis reinforces the project outcomes reported by participants receiving support. There is also a clear correlation between statistical positivity

¹ For further information and published research on the SWEMWBS, you can refer to <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/med/research/platform/wemwbs/>

compared to community norms and the number of counselling sessions delivered, reinforcing the need for extensions to counselling / therapy where this had been identified as therapeutically relevant.

Participant Feedback

The overall message from participants is that the project helped them on their journeys into work or training / education even where a formal result was not achieved. This is supported by participant feedback, including:

“Excellent opportunity – I’ve been lucky enough in the short time we have had to resolve very old significant trauma”

“ . . . has enabled me to move on with my life. I can’t imagine where I would be if I didn’t receive [this] support. It has helped me with building my confidence and voicing my needs.”

“good to talk (a lot to talk about) . . . a lot to discover and learn. It feels good to know you’re not alone, so helpful that you listened and tried to understand. A lot of burden has been taken out. A lot of pouring out (of heart). Relief”

“Changed my life, thanks”

“The best support that I’ve ever had . . . helping me open up and deal with so many issues”

“It has made a huge difference to my confidence. I feel much more able to deal with things now and that I can validate myself. It has been really helpful. I feel much more confident to start thinking about getting back to work.”

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“You’ve helped me out of a really bad place and you’ve been brilliant with me.”

“It’s helping me to get back to the person I was before the last 10 years of my life. A happy person.”

“Very good – It has helped me deal with bad memories and the tools to move forward”

“I have noticed massive positive improvements. I feel so much better. I’m much more calm and can function better in stress situations.”

4. Cross Cutting Themes

The nature of the specialist support provided by CLEAR played a key role in the equal opportunities cross cutting theme in as much as it:

- helped people tackle their barriers in their journeys into work and training
- provided access to specialist support that participants were unlikely to access if they had not joined the WDW project
- supported a higher percentage of women than the project as whole
- supported a higher percentage of men than the norm for CLEAR
- all participants supported by CLEAR identified as having poor mental health and emotional wellbeing

CLEAR supported the environmental sustainability cross cutting theme through:

- embedding WDW within the 'back office' management of the environment in terms of waste management;
- delivery of CLEAR face to face counselling and therapy was in local community venues helping to sustain their existence and reducing the need for travel by participants;
- counsellors often used the natural environment as part of an integrative approach to their work, for example use of the beach for walk and talking therapy
- through Covid 19, online and telephone counselling was introduced which further reduced the use of travel

5. Conclusions and Learning

The specialist support provided by CLEAR within WDW for people where trauma was a barrier to progression towards and into work and training proved to be a valuable and much needed ingredient of Who Dares Works. This is well evidenced by analysis of Results, Project and Clinical Outcomes and Participant Feedback.

The partnership model on which WDW was founded provided a safe and supported environment for people with complex trauma to successfully access and complete therapy/counselling. This model could be applied across other areas of partnership work. Indeed, alongside the value of CLEAR support to participants for the WDW project, CLEAR was subsequently approached to provide similar support for participants in the Positive People and Village Works projects, both funded by ESF.

The economic impact of CLEAR's role in the project was at two levels:

- **The individual** – each individual participant was given specialist support in their journeys towards work and training. This was shown in the Results achieved for the project and the specific feedback about the support and the clinical outcomes.
- **The labour market** - the positive steps taken by project participants helped expand the availability of labour within the local economy as a direct result of the Results achieved by participants and on a more long-term basis with the improvement in wellbeing for all participants supported by CLEAR.

- Proof of the efficacy of virtual support – the necessity of providing counselling/therapy by phone and video due to the pandemic and its lockdowns. Delivery through WDW was part of a broader learning within CLEAR, with some of CLEAR’s clients preferring virtual contact and this continues to be part of the offer by CLEAR within all funding streams.

Lessons Learnt For CLEAR

- There is a proven case for the value of counselling/therapy for people who have experienced trauma, including childhood sexual abuse as it is a real barrier to people’s journeys into work and training
- CLEAR can play an important part in a suite of specialist support in future Employment and Skills projects and in other partnership projects where the goal is not labour market related
- Employment and Skills projects provide an opportunity to tap into need for support from CLEAR that otherwise may remain repressed e.g. the proportion of men supported was over twice typically experienced by CLEAR.

For Future Labour Market Projects

- Trauma, including childhood sexual abuse is a real barrier to people’s journeys into work and training. Specialist support should be embedded into future projects. Within that, it is important to retain the specialism of partners like CLEAR and not expect the delivery of end to end or wider support from highly specialist partners.



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