

# SOME OF OUR FAVOURITE STORIES FROM 2022



**YOU MIGHT BE  
WONDERING,  
WHAT DO WE  
DO AT CAPACITY  
TO DELIVER  
THAT IMPACT?**

**LET US TELL YOU  
IN 6 STORIES...**

## **We provided hands-on support**

**PAGE 4** Find out how we worked with Open Door Charity to rejuvenate and “level up” towns across England through the Town Deal Investment Fund.

**PAGE 8** Catch up on how our work with Wirral MBC and Wirral families designed a new approach to Early Help in Wirral.

## **We helped build brilliant teams**

**PAGE 14** Discover how we supported the NWADCS in creating a new model to recruit and retain brilliant people and permanent children’s social workers in the region.

**PAGE 18** Read about our work helping develop General Practice Liverpool into a fully operational organisation with strategic influence at a regional level.

## **We broke silos and connected sectors**

**PAGE 24** Find out how we worked with Civic Data Cooperative (CDC) to unpick the stickiest issues of the public sector.

**PAGE 28** Have a look at our work building Juno CIC, a not-for-profit company opening high-quality residential care homes for children and young people in Liverpool City Region.

# STORIES OF HOW WE'VE PROVIDED HANDS-ON SUPPORT



# STORY 1

## Working with Open Door Charity and Wirral Community Health & Care NHS Foundation Trust (WCHC) to rejuvenate and “level up” towns across England through the Town Deal Investment Fund.



**Lee Pennington**  
Charity Director  
Open Door

“The relationship with Capacity has been extremely positive. It has been built around Capacity being a friend and ally of Open Door Charity, knowing and understanding what we do.”

### A bit of background

As part of an exciting project to rejuvenate and “level up” towns across the country, the Town Deal Investment Fund brings the opportunity to shake up new developments and new ways of thinking.

With this, Open Door (OD), along with Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust (WCHC), submitted a bid and an outline business case to fund the development of a new centre of national excellence for wellbeing in the heart of Birkenhead.

The vision was for this new centre, named Joy, to transform the Treasury Annexe building in Birkenhead into a thriving hub for arts, culture, health and wellbeing, which would empower Wirral residents to shape change, raise aspirations and improve life and health quality.

## What we heard

Open Door and WCHC had to develop a full business case that was informed, well researched and led by the voices of their local community by July 2022.

We worked together to build a plan that would respect the main aims of Joy:



Shape change and improve life and health outcomes.



Place clinical and wider support services in a safe, attractive and inclusive setting.



Support more vulnerable members of the community who are too often left behind.



Attract new visitors to the area to engage with art & culture.



Increase partnership working and knowledge/skills sharing across a diverse network of public and third sector partners.

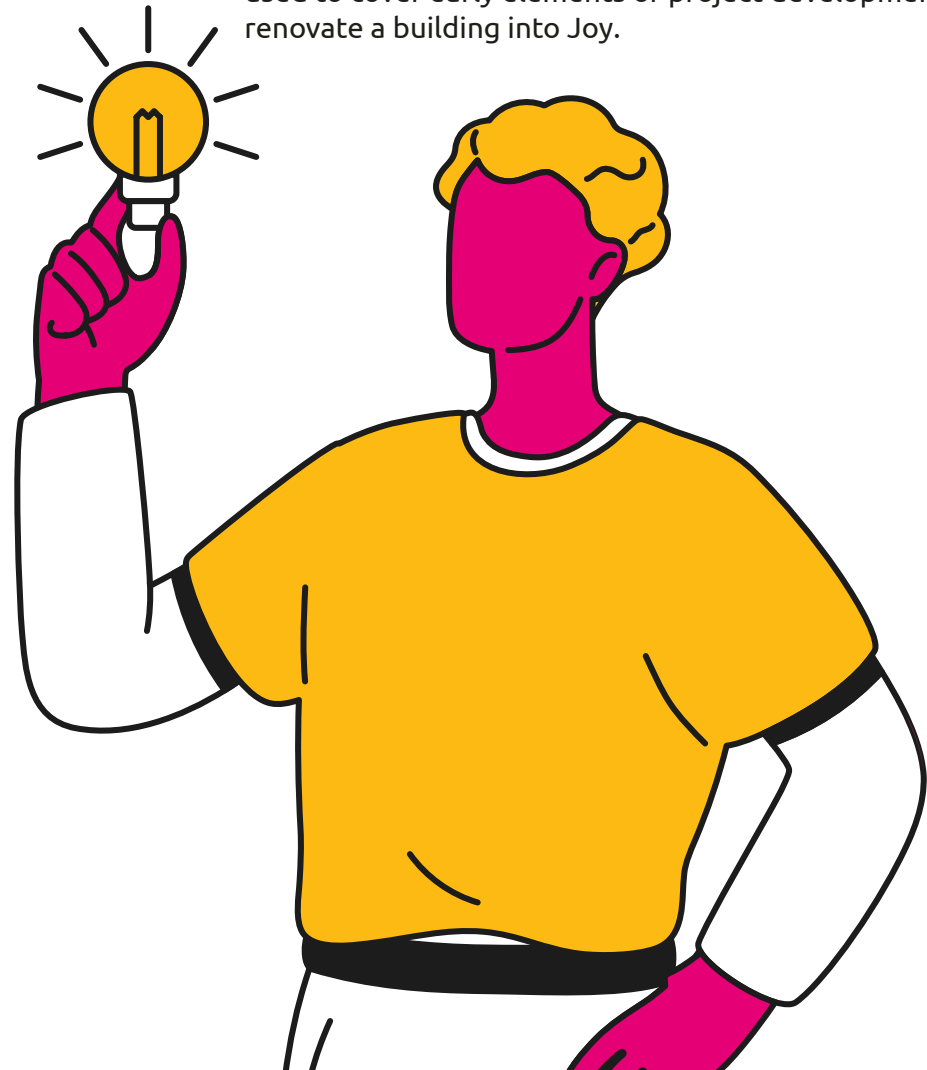


Inject life, positivity and colour into the area.

## What we did

We helped Open Door transform their ideas into a full business case, focusing on two aspects, project management and greater communications - helping to identify the external key messages between OD/WCHC.

As a result, we were able to successfully secure over £3.8 million in capital funding, including £174k pre-development funding from The Towns Fund which will be used to cover early elements of project development to renovate a building into Joy.



# STORY 2

## Working with Wirral MBC and Wirral families to redesign a new approach to Early Help in Wirral.



**Elizabeth Hartley**  
Director of Early Help  
Wirral MBC

Imagine you're ripping it up and starting again, what could we do differently?"

### A bit of background

In 2019, Capacity was commissioned by Wirral MBC to work with families, communities and the council themselves to redesign a new approach to Early Help in Wirral as part of their Community Matters project. Set up as a group of local voluntary, community, faith and educational organisations, Community Matters gathered their support to test a more community-based support model – one where families were referred to a local organisation to help develop a family plan for their needs.

With this Capacity was commissioned to work alongside the communities and the council to shape how Community Matters should look in coming years, to meet the needs of both children and families across the Wirral.

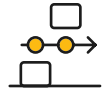
We listened to these communities to understand how Early Help services would need to change to deliver meaningful impact; speaking to over 450 children, young people, parents, carers, guardians and professionals, who were unanimous in their feedback - *they don't want traditional "services"*.

Children and families shared hundreds of examples of wonderful support that they'd received in Wirral; when they spoke, they rarely described programmes or pathways, they described **people**.

## What we heard

In January 2020 we presented a report collating all those insights and presenting our suggested new approach to Early Help, one that built around the insights of families. What we heard from the families we talked to was that they wanted Early Help to empower and inspire them, to be local to them, to support their whole family, to connect them to others, and to have open and honest communication.

With these insights, Wirral MBC then asked us to continue to work across the community to:



Develop an innovative, creative and asset-based early help model. A model co-design with communities, funders and the Local Authority, and one that was tested before rolling out larger-scale pilots.



Be an active link between Wirral Council and its community, enabling all parties to work together to support the borough in being a great place to grow up, with families and communities being empowered to do more for themselves and to achieve improved outcomes.

The covid-19 pandemic delayed the start of things but eventually, in late 2020, we set out to work.

## What we did

For two years, we worked hard to create the right conditions for change. We worked with professionals across health, social care and community services to foster trust, collaboration and shared learning through working groups & 1-2-1 work. We spent time with families developing a style for communications, branding and a framework for what the family experience should feel like within this project. We gave third-sector partners more trust & flexibility in their delivery by designing and supporting WMBC to commission an Alliance contracting model, and trialled collective impact tools to understand what's really changing as a result.

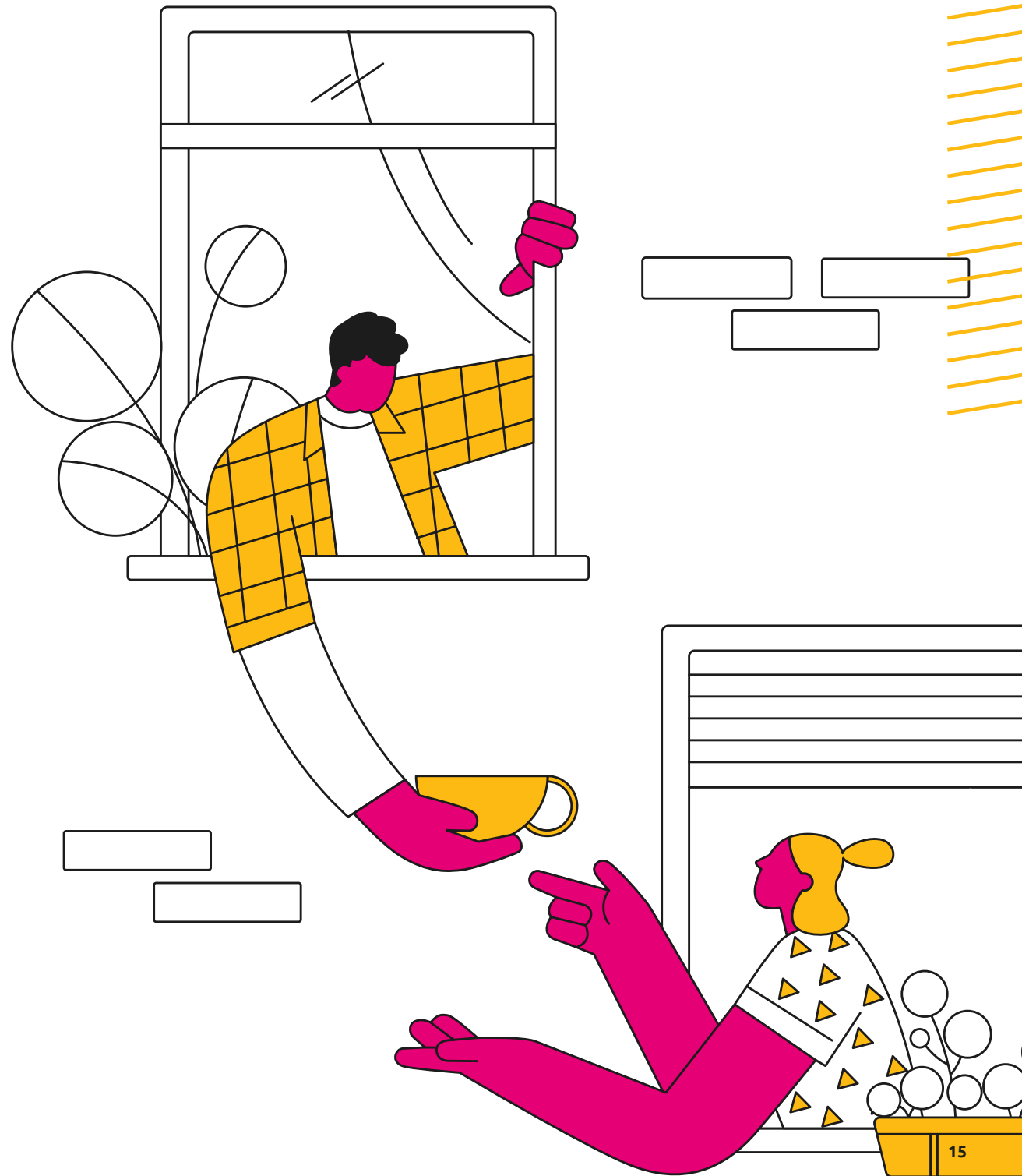
We launched several service delivery model pilots and kept asking questions about their efficacy. We facilitated the wind-down of more traditional referral pathways, exploring different opportunities for families to engage that put them in the driving seat.

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The combined result of all that work is the April 2022 launch of an approach called the 'Family Toolbox Alliance'. This Alliance is made up of a group of third-sector organisations working together with the Local Authority, sharing risk and responsibility for success, to promote earlier, more person-centred interventions at a community level. We've worked with the Council to ensure this model was commissioned as a 5-9 year contract, working with families to develop a set of core values that are at the heart of the model.

The Capacity team have also designed, developed and launched a unique digital support tool - the Family Toolbox website, created alongside families. Its purpose is to allow them to find tips and tools quickly - ways to deal with their challenges, and find and access appropriate, local support afterwards.

We've wrapped this together with a new awareness-building campaign for earlier work with families – rebranding it as 'Family Toolbox' (a name proposed by a parent and voted for by families).





# STORIES OF HOW WE HELPED BUILD BRILLIANT TEAMS



# STORY 3

## Working with NWADCS (the Association for Directors of Children's Services in the North West) to reimagine children's social care workforce in the North West.

### **A bit of background**

As emphasised in the Independent Review of Children's Social Care Final Report, recruitment and retention of Children's Social Workers within Local Authorities are proving extremely challenging across the UK, with increasing use of agency workers as professionals move outside of direct LA employment. In the North West, there has been a 62% increase in the agency worker rate since 2013, compared to a national increase of 29%.

There will always be a role and requirement for some level of agency work in a front-line profession like Social Work. However, "the rates in children's social work are inexcusably high at 15.5%, double the rate of adult social care (Skills for Care, 2020; DfE, 2021). 2.6% of social workers moved from permanent local authority employment to agency roles in 2021 alone (DfE, 2022). Once social workers are in agency roles, they are more likely to move around, contributing to the instability children and families experience" (Independent Review, June 2022).

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Agency social workers generally cost significantly more than a permanent social worker, as the independent review highlighted, “recent analysis conducted for the DfE has estimated the additional cost of employing agency staff at approximately £26,000 per worker per year (53% of the average social worker salary) (Kantar, 2020). This means there is a loss of over £100 million per year that could be better spent on front-line activity to support children and families.

We know the best sort of social work comes from great relationships between people, and to have those we need staff teams that aren’t always changing. Families need social workers they can develop strong bonds with and who can earn their trust. But that can’t happen if social work teams are constantly changing. We need to change Local Authority departments, so people want to work directly in them, because it’s a great atmosphere, because they feel like part of a team and most importantly because they as people feel looked after themselves.

## What we heard

In January 2022, Capacity met with Simone White (Director of Children’s Services for Wirral MBC) to explore ways that our skilled and committed team could continue to support positive change for children and families in the North West.

We were keen to understand how our approach and expertise could support wider system change and achieve real impact for local partners.

The challenge that Simone posed to Capacity was:



How do we create a permanent Local Authority workforce of engaged and effective social workers who support children and families to thrive?



How do we compete with the flexibility, benefits and variety that agencies can offer individuals in the sector? Is there a role for an LA-backed, not-for-profit agency that gives us more control in terms of quality and cost?

We knew that teams across the North West and the wider UK face similar issues and are looking for imaginative, sustainable solutions for change. With 18% of the workforce nationally employed by an agency, it was time to create space to think differently about how Local Authorities can really tackle this growing challenge.

We set out on a project with three outlined phases: phase 1 would involve deep listening to surface the main challenges and potential solutions, phase 2 would use those insights to build a proposed plan, and phase 3 would involve the roll-out of the feasibility plan, which would likely take place in 2023.



## What we did

The first phase of this project relied on really listening to the current workforce, senior leaders in Local Authorities and regional agencies to understand what a competitive alternative offer needs to provide to be an effective and sustainable business.

We listened closely to the people who do or have done, the role of children's social workers in the region, as well as those who lead, train, and support them. We held detailed one-to-one conversations with Principal Social Workers and/or senior managers as well as social workers from 7 local authorities. 220 additional social workers (26 of these were agency workers) from across the region engaged with this project by participating in a detailed survey asking about their experiences and drivers, which shows the shared passion across the workforce to get this right. We also spoke to officers within procurement, finance and organisational development and understood the relationships and contracts the Local Authority currently holds with recruitment agencies they currently use.

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We identified some consistent themes with the ultimate aim of improving recruitment and retention amongst the children's social care workforces of all Local Authorities. These included: improvements in organisational culture, salary and perks harmonisation, increased tech and back-office support and tangible offers for workforce development. We found that a not-for-profit agency/bank model could help to bring in more consistency of pay scales across the region, resulting in fewer bidding wars, and more quality control by providing experienced staff. All these insights were distilled in a 20-page report presented in July 2022.

We were asked by NWADCS to put together a funding bid and won that funding, and then proceeded to prepare an in-depth feasibility study to break the cycle of temporary recruitment, which we presented in September 2022. The report presented different service models to pilot an alternative to the existing set-up, listing thoroughly the pros and cons for each of them, while emphasising that this new "external" model had to be rolled out together with a series of "internal" changes.

A group of authorities have now decided to deliver the pilot and working to decide which model they will test. At Capacity, we will continue to support them during 2023 with the rollout.



# STORY 4

## Working with General Practice Liverpool (previously known as Liverpool Network Alliance) to help them develop into a fully operational organisation.



Hearing from General Practice, once and with volume, makes every job in the system easier"

**Jan Edwards**

Liverpool Director of Place  
Cheshire & Merseyside Integrated Care Board

### A bit of background

The quickly evolving modern face of the health and social care system is being driven by newly formed Integrated Care Systems, and Primary Care Networks (in particular General Practice) and as relatively new entities themselves needed to find and establish their place in that new structure.

Following the recognition of the need for a shared platform for General Practice in 2018, the Liverpool Network Alliance (LNA) was set up in 2019 as the "network of networks" for primary care networks in the city and designed to support General Practice to come together, work together, and make a larger local impact together.

From the outset, the organisation had two very clear aims. First, an internal aim to support development learning and support between PCNs in a time of significant change for the NHS and the wider system – most specifically through the introduction of Integrated Care Systems. And second, an external focus to ensure this new and wider 'system' heard the voices of General Practice in Liverpool and had the knowledge, tools and understanding to engage them in their decision-making.

The LNA went on to play a key role in the vaccination campaigns of 2020 and 2021 which although very successful, took the focus away from the organisational development side of their offer. A review of their work highlighted an organisational development need within the existing project, with governance, independence and strategy needing more focus. That's when the LNA, which was then renamed as General Practice Liverpool (GPL) came to us.

## What we heard

We took the context above and throughout several conversations with the organisation we identified the following needs:



Defining and promoting the offer/role of primary care in future integrated care partnerships.



Finding what brings General Practice and their PCNs together, by focusing on what values and direction we share we minimise the risk of lots of unclear voices vs one loud one.



Creating an organisation as its own entity - at the start of the project, the LNA was part of the soon-to-be disbanded CCG.



Engaging grassroots members across PCNs in doing this together – establishing the purpose and direction of travel together.

## What we did

Our first piece of work was working with members of the LNA leadership team to fine-tune the brief. We wanted to understand where they wanted to get to, what success looked like and what we needed to do to get there. We went on to listen to a wide group of stakeholders to gain clarity on how the vision differed between audiences. We did this through an extended listening exercise with PCNs, Clinical Directors and wider system partners using one-to-one interviewing and workshops to get under the skin of the shared vision and objectives.

In addition, we developed an options appraisal for the organisational structure, taking time to work through the options, pros, and cons across a range of General Practice and system viewpoints. By co-producing this with a group of Clinical Directors through a project steering group we ensured we had buy-in and ownership from the core team at the start.

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## From there, we:

1. Created a Strategic Plan and associated processes
2. Recruited a fit for purpose leadership team
3. Built solid and aspirational governance structures

## The result?

Over 18 months, we incubated General Practice Liverpool into a fully operational project in its own right, made up of its own Leadership Team and experienced committee members. The organisation is now acting as a mechanism for General Practice to engage at a regional level – giving them strategic influence and supporting the sustainability of General Practice in the long run.





# STORIES OF HOW WE BROKE SILOS AND CONNECTED SECTORS



# STORY 5

## Working with Civic Data Cooperative (CDC) to unpick the stickiest issues of the public sector



**Liz Ashall-Payne**  
CEO & Co-Founder  
ORCHA Health

This program has really supported a truly collaborative approach to dealing with fully understood problems across the city region. The program was well organised, well promoted and well considered.

I've taken away a better network, and a better understanding of the true challenges- a shared vision for LCR. We now all have more opportunities for innovations cross-sector."

### A bit of background

In September 2021, CDC launched their ambitious programme 'Design Thinking for Health', with the desire to get under the skin of the role that SMEs play in using data when designing solutions for public services. This complex and complicated landscape required CDC to pause and unpick how they could contribute to the LCR in order to bring about real meaningful change and impact.

This was the first programme launched by CDC, it created the opportunity to build their culture, release their brand and establish themselves as a leading player in the role of data in public services and the SME economy in LCR.



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## What we heard

To support the delivery of this programme, CDC commissioned the help of Capacity to engage with a diverse number of stakeholders, design the campaign, deliver the programme and share the insights to shape the development of CDC’s culture and future.

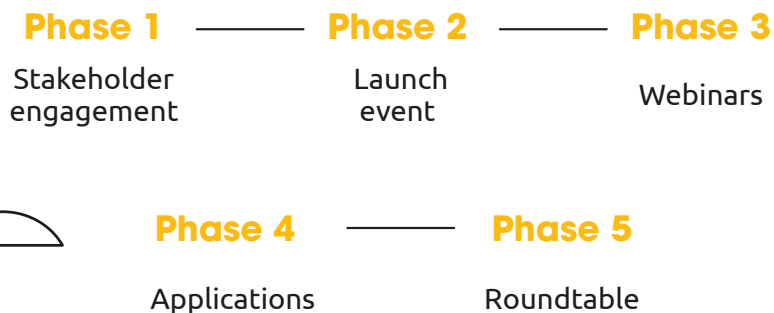
By working jointly with CDC, we were able to listen and engage with key stakeholders across the region to gather insights and start some solution-based thinking of how best to use civic data to create better public and third-sector experiences for the communities affected by them.

**This wasn’t just about opening doors between the sectors; it was about taking them off the hinges.**



## What we did

Capacity designed and delivered an extensive programme over five distinct phases:



The programme reached **174** individuals through its various outputs. Each individual represented LCRs public services, the local SME and VCSE economy and supporting organisations.

Three LCR-focused SMEs were awarded a total of **£52.94K** worth of seed funding and further opportunities to work with CDC to embed real data into the development of their product or research.

Many other SMEs or individuals connected with the programme via the webinar series of support and launch event.

# STORY 6

**Building We Are Juno CIC, a not-for-profit company opening high-quality residential care homes for children and young people.**



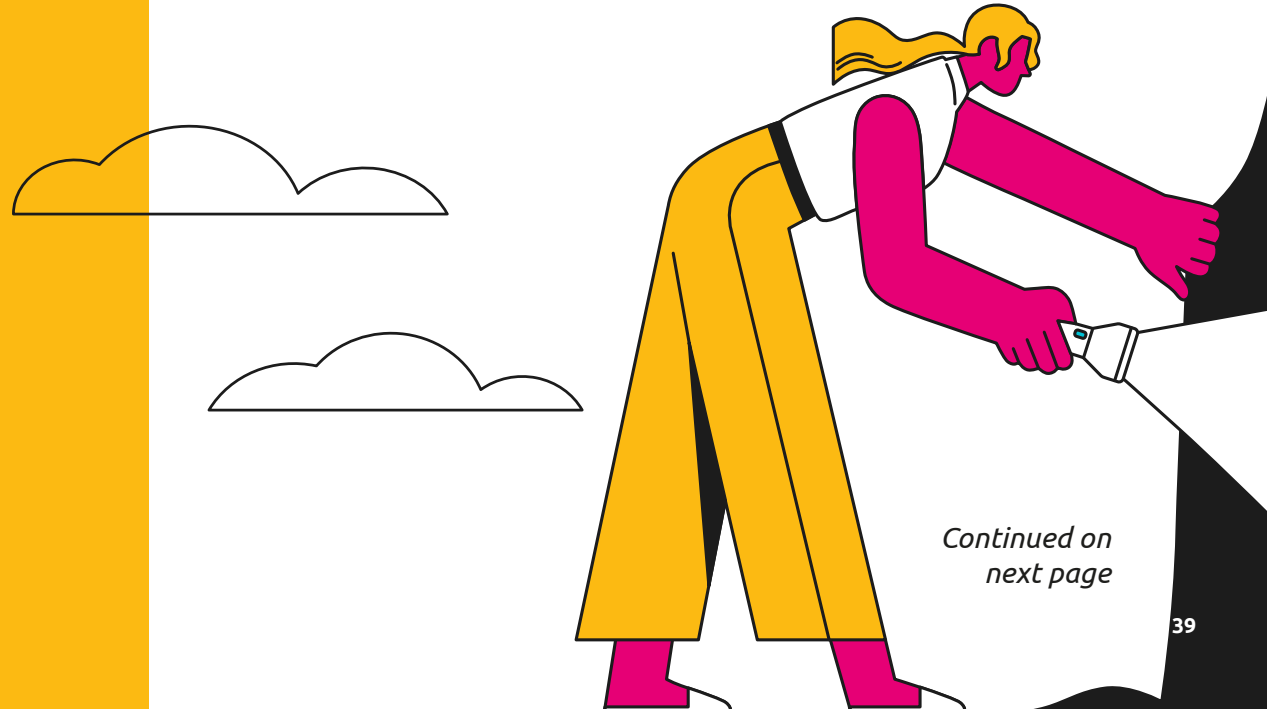
**Jess**  
15, Liverpool

When you become part of that home, you become part of that family"

## A bit of background

There are currently 80,000 children in care in England. These children have poorer life chances than their peers. Despite a language of being "looked after", in reality, many children still grow up in a system that denies them the stability, relationships and experiences that underpin a happy and healthy adulthood. There is urgent need for reform: the current system is failing thousands of children.

Capacity worked with Commissioning Teams from across Liverpool City Region to conduct extensive research at the start of this project to ensure we understood the local context. We found that there is an urgent need for more local, high-quality children's homes in LCR. A child in our region needs a residential care home every day, and every other day, a child is sent out of the area.



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Private equity-backed providers dominate here, with 89% of homes registered for mainstream placements operated by the private sector. Less than 8% of providers are achieving Outstanding standards and although private equity firms are generating up to 17% profit on placement costs, outcomes for young people aren't improving.

Larger private providers are acquiring smaller local businesses creating risks and instability for the functioning of the market and only 2% of homes are operated by the voluntary sector.

Early Help budgets are under increasing strain, made only worse by the economic impact of Covid-19 on Local Authority budgets in LCR – **something needed to change.**



## What we heard

In 2019 Capacity was approached by the LCR Children's Commissioners group – with a mandate for wider market reform from the Directors of Children's Services across the City Region - to help design a new approach that could meet significant local challenges in the residential market based on our track record in service design.

Capacity secured a development grant from The National Lottery Communities Fund (TNLCF), which covered elements of the Feasibility Planning (including external legal advice costs), and took forward all other aspects (stakeholder engagement, data analysis, programme management, service planning and design) as a pro bono piece of work - because solving this issue sits at the heart of why we exist.

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In line with our commitment to co-designing services with the communities that they serve, we worked closely with care experienced young people, local authority teams responsible for their care and leaders in social care throughout the development period. We were also supported by two leading organisations on the field: Catch 22 and ThemPra. Together, we set out to build a model that would:



Put outcomes of children and young people at the front of all delivery.



Achieve strategic level transformation of children’s residential services and promote better expectations of providers.



Encourage a diverse range of organisations to develop close working relationships with the LCR Local Authorities, increasing placement availability within the region.



Drive up the service quality across all children’s residential provisions.



Create a sustainable financial model with long-term contracts and pricing commitments.



Ensure a greater social value contribution to our local communities.

## What we did

Since 2020, we have



Undertook a detailed, co-produced Feasibility Study and Business Plan. These were done in close consultation with care-experienced young people in LCR, and were followed by a detailed financial model and a full external legal review on the most appropriate governance model between staff, local authorities, and Capacity.



We gained approval from LCR Local Authorities to work in collaboration to implement the model, with monthly multi-agency Project Group Meetings.

Secured over £2.2m of start-up social investment and grants.

Incorporated & incubated a new social enterprise, We Are Juno CIC, appointed its Board of Directors, and established a working governance structure.

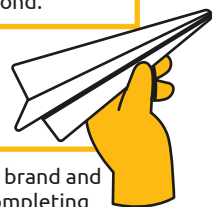


Developed a property partnership with local Housing Associations to buy, build or adapt existing properties and turn them into suitable homes.

Refurbished our first home, got a second home in the pipeline for refurbishment and opening in 2023, and good options for further homes in 2024 and beyond.



Got the Juno Young Leaders group up and running, including the appointment of a facilitator, a push across LCR for care experienced young adults to join the Group, a launch event in Liverpool, regular get-togethers and activities.



Launched the Juno CIC brand and started recruitment, completing recruitment for our Director of Care and Registered Manager.

In 2023 we will continue to work towards our vision of making sure that every child who needs residential care across LCR finds a home where they can thrive, opening our first homes to children, building and strengthening the Juno team, and continuing to identify new homes.

# FROM THE HORSES MOUTH...WHAT OUR PARTNERS SAY ABOUT US



**Allison Dean**  
Deputy CEO  
Koala North West

I think it's massively important to have experienced leaders mentoring up and coming leaders. Alison at Capacity has been an amazing mentor, she has helped me become more comfortable and confident. Knowing that I can do it, and that I do have a voice.



**Eleanor Fielding**  
Programme Manager  
Civic Data Cooperative

It's been brilliant working with Capacity, it was co-development from the word go. To have someone who understands your work and gives an external viewpoint has been very beneficial in helping us to define where we sit and what we offer.



**David Osbourne**  
CEO, Catalyst Choices

Capacity is our extended leadership team...this is a partnership.



**Sarah Williams**  
Network Manager  
Childwall & Wavertree  
Primary Care Network

Working with Capacity is always a Joy; you know that you are going to get passionate people who want to make a difference. They have positive attitudes, spending valuable time getting to know us and learning about what we wanted to achieve.



**Lewis Smith**  
Research  
Development Manager  
University of Liverpool

Not only did Capacity help us develop the plan and develop the project, but they also really hit the ground running from the very first meeting. It felt very much like a two way dialogue between us and Capacity.



**Zoe Richardson**  
Therapeutic Lead  
Open Door Charity

They're a source of inspiration as a team that can provide a bridge between the third sector orgs and council. They really 'got' what that offer should be and spent the time on the ground asking the right questions.



**Making Public Services  
People Services**

**[thiscapacity.co.uk](http://thiscapacity.co.uk)**