The Academy of Wide-Hearted Living CIC

Wintering Well

Online Wellbeing Programme

Presented By:
Melissa Noble

Project report
Jan - Mar 2026

2026

www.wideheartedliving.com

COMMUNITY FUND

Wintering Well

Executive Summary

Wintering Well was a fully funded wellbeing and peer-support programme delivered from January to March 2026 to support freelancers, sole traders, small VCSE groups and changemakers across Cornwall, Devon and Somerset.

Funded by The National Lottery Community Fund, it offered weekly group coaching, co-working sessions and connection sessions as well as a series of creative workshops to help participants stay grounded and connected during winter.

The programme provided a calm, supportive space for sharing challenges, building resilience and maintaining momentum. Offered free of charge, Wintering Well strengthened community connection and supported healthier working lives during a season that can be isolating and demanding.

> This programme has helped me stay motivated through a difficult winter and navigate some big life changes. Thanks to the amazing facilitators and participants, I feel part of something very special.

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Project Overview

Summary of the project

We promoted the programme through a taster session, social media, our newsletter and partner newsletters. Although the campaign coincided with the busy Christmas period, Karen Marshall's beautiful graphics and well-crafted messaging helped us fill all 30 places. Knowing that not everyone who registered would attend, we continued recruitment throughout January to give as many people as possible the opportunity to join.

Participants received a Welcome Pack, emphasising the flexibility of the sessions. They also received an invitation to an Online Space for on-going connection and resource sharing.

We sought feedback every step of the way and asked participants to select workshop topics and themes for exploring in the coaching sessions. We offered a range of coaching formats and added in extra workshops to help more people attend. Workshops were open to everyone. Our most popular: "How to Winter Well".

I haven't been depressed once this Winter and I think that's down to this programme

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Organisational Overview

The Academy of Wide-Hearted Living CIC

The Academy's mission is to support "Changemakers" - people who want to make a positive difference in the world, including those currently held back by personal circumstances. We also aim to support people who WANT to make a difference but are not sure how to do it.

Organisation's aim and experience:

The Academy's aims are to improve wellbeing, foster connection, and increase joy through creative, inclusive programming.

In 2023, Melissa designed and delivered the Wellbeing for Changemakers programme in partnership with the Network of Wellbeing. Participants praised the variety of activities, the quality of resources, and the supportive structure that encouraged personal growth and creative risk-taking.

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Facilitator's credentials

The Academy of Wide-Hearted Living CIC

This programme was led by Melissa Noble, founder of The Academy of Wide-Hearted Living CIC. Melissa is a creative facilitator with extensive experience in trauma-informed practice, wellbeing-focused programme design, and community engagement.

Qualifications

2024: CMI Coaching and Mentoring
2019: BACP Counselling Skills (Level 3)
2017: City & Guilds Creative Techniques (Level 2)
2008: CIPD Certificate in Training Practice (Level 3)
1993: BSc Applied Social Science (Health Studies), 2:1

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Our Team

Karen (Canny) Marshall

Marketing | Co-coach | Workshop support and resource production

Karen Marshall is a marketing consultant and coach with a passion for design and problem solving. She's known for helping people get things moving and making ideas happen.

Special focus: marketing and business clarity, communications, confidence building and purpose design.

Sarah Leppard

Neurodiversity awareness workshop

Sarah Leppard is a neurodiversity coach and advocate who supports individuals to better understand how their brains work and find ways of working and living that feel more natural and sustainable.

Special focus: neurodivergent support, self-understanding, energy management, reducing overwhelm and building personalised strategies.

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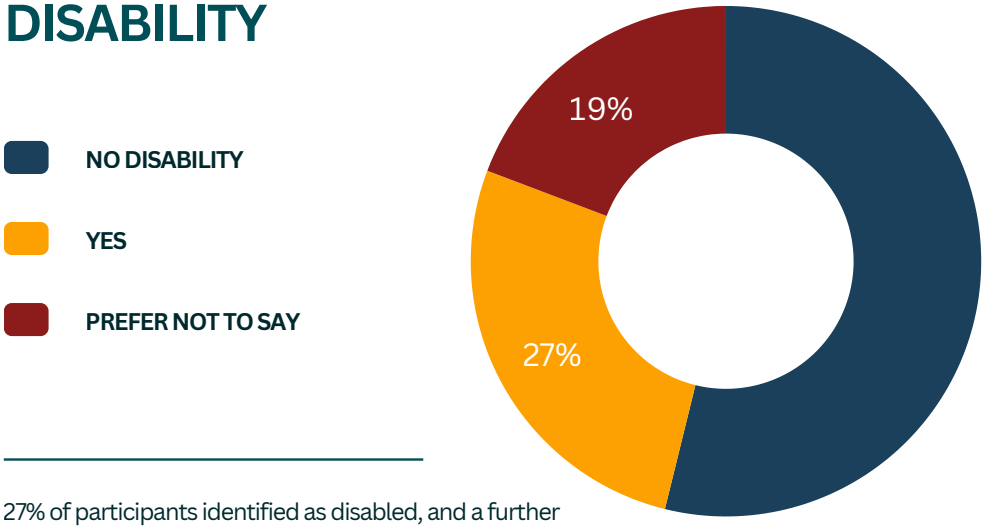
Inclusion

WINTERING WELL

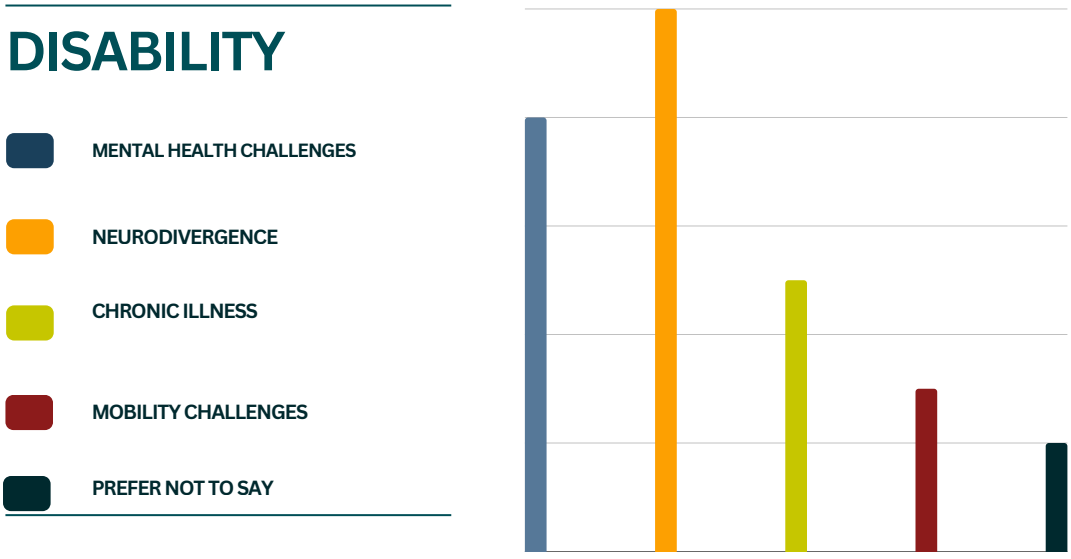
DISABILITY



27% of participants identified as disabled, and a further 19% selected ‘prefer not to say’, with many of them later indicating relevant disability types. This suggests the session reached a broad mix of access needs.

WINTERING WELL

DISABILITY



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Impact

felt enlivening and connecting

Relaxing, fun and it surprised me how much I enjoyed the exercises.

The contents of the workshop were interesting and well presented, the discussions were enlightening

A good balance of presentation and sharing by the group. It gave space to think & reflect.

Loved the sense of community, kindness and friendliness within the group

Helped me feel understood and validated - and gave me things to think about

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Evaluation

Survey feedback shows that the programme delivered high-quality, well-received support across all core elements, with particularly strong engagement in the workshop strand.

Workshop satisfaction was excellent, with 90% of respondents rating their workshop 4 or 5 out of 5, and 57% giving the highest score, demonstrating consistently positive participant experience and strong delivery at session level.

Group coaching was typically rated 4–5, with participants valuing the reflective space and supportive facilitation.

Co-working sessions received some of the strongest feedback, with several respondents rating them “5 – brilliant” and highlighting the motivation, accountability, and sense of rhythm they provided.

Check Out & Celebrate was also well-received, with attendees rating it 4 or 5 and appreciating the opportunity for reflection and closure.

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Impact

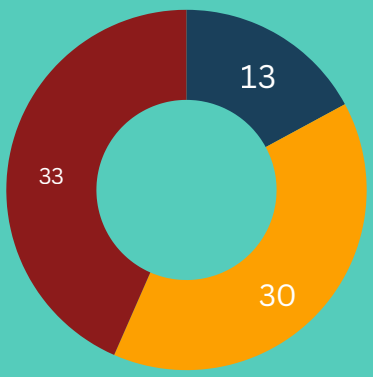
100%

Of end-survey respondents said that they would recommend the programme to a friend

WINTERING WELL

WEMBDS

- DIPPED
- STABLE
- IMPROVED



sample of 11 participants, comparing WEMBDS responses at the beginning and end of the programme

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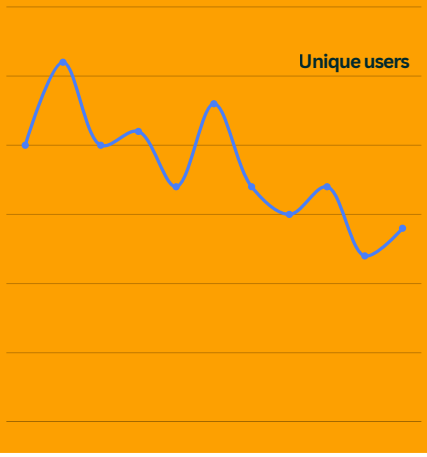
Attendance

Peak attendance = Wintering Well workshop weeks

Tuesday's Group Coaching consistently attracted the most attendees

Most people attended 1 - 2 sessions per week. Some attended 4 - 5 sessions

We expected attendance to drop as the days got lighter - and we were right!



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Lessons learned

Suggestions for improvement from attendees:

- offering a slightly longer programme to allow trust to deepen;
- reducing the number of weekly sessions to avoid overwhelm;
- adjusting session timings;
- adding occasional specialist workshops; and
- exploring opportunities for in-person connection.

Our experience ...

- We chronically underestimated time required for the administration of the project
- Engagement in the online space was lower than expected
- People spoke about wanting to get to know other participants better - but attendance at the networking sessions was fairly low (average 4 people per session)
- Avoid launching a programme over the festive period
- Get funding in place earlier

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Future plans

'Wintering Well has been used as spring board to develop and deliver 'Working Well' a season approach to working and balancing life through coaching, creativity and connection. Working Well is now set up as a team, with Karen and Sarah joining me to deliver sessions, offering a rich, year-round programme.

Our long-term vision is to nurture our community.

Group coaching topics focussed on finding clarity, avoiding overwhelm, setting priorities and gaining confidence to become more visible.

We want to build a long-term programme that provides people with on-going support and mentoring, because overcoming these issues takes time

We will launch this with an in-person event, to encourage more connection, early on in the programme.

We will explore ways of increasing engagement in the online space

We will seek funding for a Winter Wellbeing festival.

We will enhance our neurodiversity-friendly practices and ensure that the space is accessible as we can make it.

This is just the beginning. Exciting times ahead.

Melissa

The Academy of Wide-Hearted Living

NURTURE | EXPLORE | TRANSFORM

Enquiries regarding this project, its methodology, or potential collaborative opportunities are warmly welcomed.

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Huge thanks to the National Lottery Community Fund for making this programme possible. We are incredibly grateful for your support.

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And a final HUGE thanks to Karen Marshall. Her support, guidance, practical help and friendship made everything about this feel easier. And fun. Thank you.

Appendix

Day-by-day attendance

	w/b 07/01/26	13/01...	20/...	27/0...	03/...	10/0...	24/0...	03/...	10/0...	17/0...	24/0...	Average
Tues	4	9	10	13	9	12	9	7	2	6	7	**8**
Weds	8	5	9	9	6	7	9	workshop	3	5	4	**6**
Thurs	5	5	7	8	6	7	6	2	3	6	3	**5**
Fri	workshop	workshop	5	7	9	workshop	6	1	workshop	4	9	**6**

Appendix

Workshop attendance

	Attended - Wintering Well folk	Registered - external	Attended -external	Total attendees
Calm Christmas			4	4
Vision Board	10		0	10
How to Winter Well	13	13	4	17
Winter Well with Creativity	7	8	2	9
Neurodiversity Awareness 10	10			10
Let's Get Visible	13	7	4	17