The Academy of Wide-Hearted Living

NURTURE | EXPLORE | TRANSFORM

ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26

Wintering Well programme

COMMUNITY FUND

CEO'S STATEMENT

At the Academy of Wide-Hearted Living, we envision a world where everyone is connected to their creativity and knows how to use it to enhance life. We believe that when people are given the tools, space, and time to focus on their wellbeing, they feel better - and that helps them show up fully and do great work. Self-care isn't selfish; it's essential. And creativity can play a powerful role in that.

"025/26 has been a year of continued experimentation. Of trying many things and, occasionally. watching them fly. Our big news of the year was not one but two successful funding applications - two very different projects, each with wellbeing and connection at their heart.

New collaborations are growing wings, and as Creativity for Wellbeing continues to be recognised as a route to wellbeing, it is an incredibly exciting time. Let's see where the next 12 months takes us!

MELISSA NOBLE
CEO
THE ACADEMY OF WIDE-HEARTED LIVING CIC

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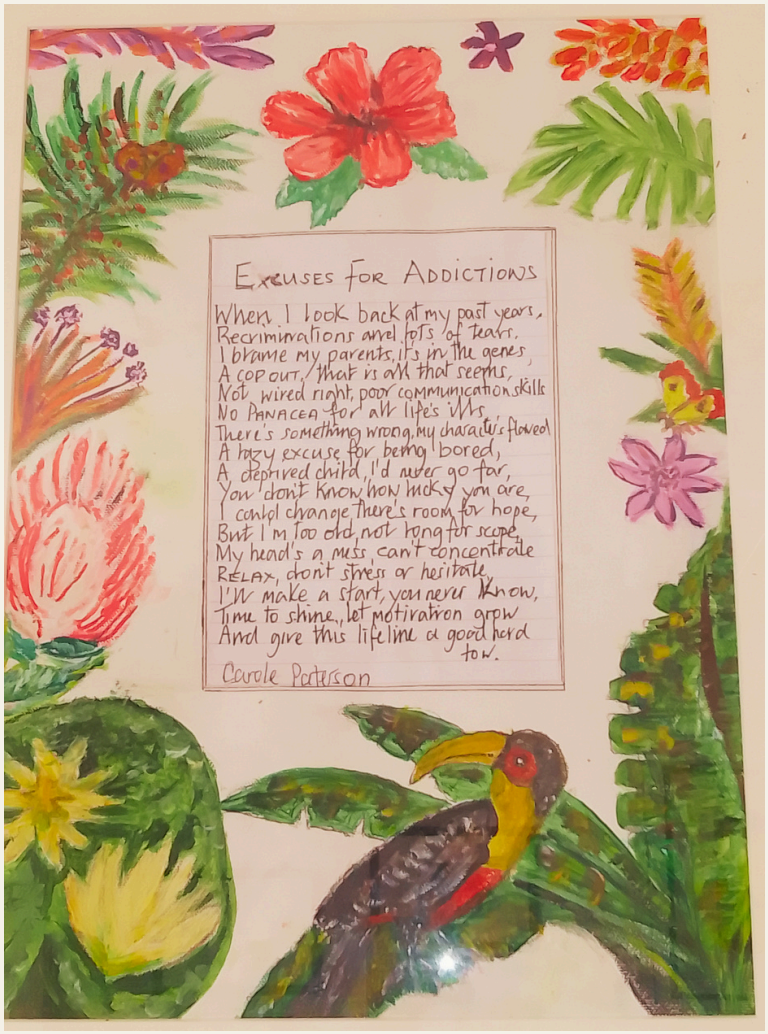


AL FRESCO SKETCHING MAKES OUR HEARTS SING!

DAY RETREATS, FESTIVALS AND WORKSHOPS

Sober Open Mic Festival in June brought al fresco creativity to 8 people and was the beginning of a brilliant partnership with Together Drug and Alcohol services.

Art Explorer in Teignmouth brought another 4 lovely people together for a day of creative play, finding liberation on the page and off.

Our first workshop at Yellow Umbrella had 6 people making Mini-Zines

Signed up as a mentor for Digital Boost. Delivered 6 mentoring sessions and delivered Spark Sessions: Banish Procrastination to over 45 people. I've run this workshop 3 times now, reaching over **50** people this year.

12 sessions

80 unique users

“loved having space to play and just ‘be’

DAYLIGHT SAVING CLUB

A much smaller group for Daylight Saving Club this year - 6 people signed up (all returning visitors.) I was worried that the smaller group size would impact on people's enjoyment of the sessions. I needn't have worried. People said that the smaller group size meant they got more from it. Felt more connected to their own process and to each other. Let's see what next year brings!

"Perfect mix of creativity, self care and connection with others. I'm sure it has had something to do with this being the first winter I haven't fallen into depression/SAD for as long as I can remember."

"It was something cosy to look forward to each week. Loved the community feeling of making stuff together, more so than making anything perfect."

"3 weeks on, one week off made it very doable, no overwhelm. Being able to have the option of a Tuesday or Saturday each week made it possible to attend all sessions. It was great to feel part of a wellbeing group at this time of year. Made me appreciate the darkness rather than fight it or be frustrated by it."

"I have not felt lonely, I've focussed on connecting with myself."

"I have felt part of something very special where fun, creativity and authenticity go hand in hand. I felt truly reconnected with myself and the world"

Wintering Well programme

Our first funding! £3871 to run a 3 month Winter Wellbeing programme. Aimed at freelancers and isolated home-workers.

This online wellbeing programme blended coaching, co-working, creativity and supportive community, to help people feel more resourced, less alone, and steadier in both work and life. The programme ran from 6 Jan to the end of March 2026.

We had 30 spaces available but over-subscribed, knowing that we would see some drop off in attendance. We also ran 5 open workshops. The most popular of these was 'Let's Get Visible' - a workshop aimed at people who find it difficult to put themselves and their services out into the world.

I delivered the programme in partnership with Karen Marshall from Canny Marketing. Karen (also a qualified coach and mentor) took care of the marketing and helped hold the coaching and co-working spaces. Her support was intrinsic to the success of this programme.

40 sessions

48 unique users

81 hours of delivery

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

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.

Wintering Well

Impact

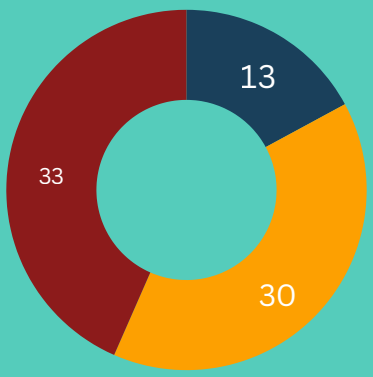
100%

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

WINTERING WELL

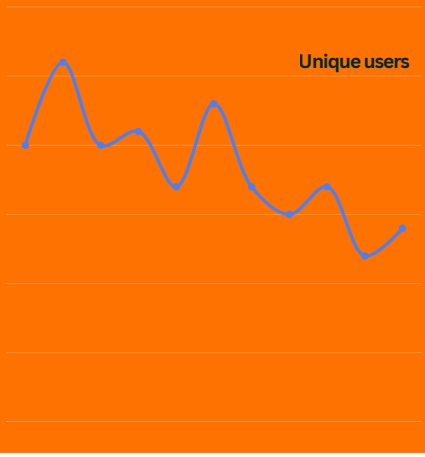
Attendance

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!

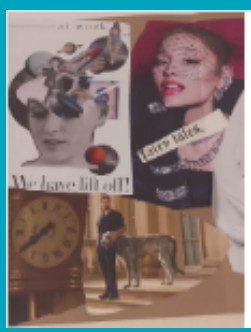


12 week pilot project funded by Together Drug and Alcohol services

Our second funding! £5000 from Devon Community Foundation (on behalf of the Police and Crime Commision to run a 7 month programme.

It's been a rocky road. I have 3 steady participants and 1 in-and-out. The intention is to continue building a peer-mentor based creative recovery community. Application to ACE has just been submitted for a further 12 months. Keep them fingers crossed.

click here



wide hearted living individual courses

Individual courses to help you get more out of life. You'll discover new ways to deal with challenges and make life much more joyful

wideheartedliving.com

24 sessions

17 unique service users

statistical evidence of significant impact...

Impact

What 3 Words

Each week, participants share three words describing how they feel at the start and end of a session. The shift is often striking:

Before	After
achy, tired, curious	content, grateful, excited
energized, irritable, unwell	happy, alive, content
hot, strange, imbalanced	reinvigorated, honoured, happy
tired, flat, tempted	grateful, happy, thoughtful
rough, grumpy and huffy	happy, hopeful, wistful

Impact

It's been mind-opening and very helpful to be around people with similar problems

Feeling proud to have completed the course and to have gotten to know everyone

I have loved the Time to Shine idea, and the way we get lost in the activities and all feel better afterwards

This has been a very interesting and helpful group – an inspiring journey, meeting like-minded souls and making friends

Time to Shine has been really helpful – it is one of the first group-style that I have attended. It has helped me feel integrated and not so alone.

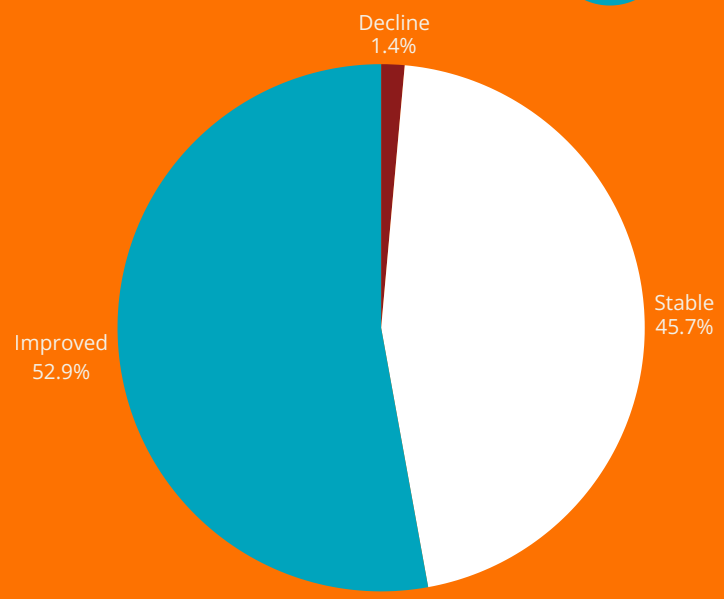
It has provided me with ideas and skills I can use to help me and I have felt safe and accepted within the group

Time to Shine Together

Impact

End of project: results

Six people journeyed through the programme. We used the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale to assess their wellbeing at the beginning, mid-point and end of the programme*
Stats available for 5/6



This chart depicts the change in participants responses from beginnig to end of the project.
14 questions. 5 people. 70 responses.
We found 1 point where the mark had declined.
32 remained stable. 37 improved.

We have continued to increase our engagement through our monthy newsletters and social media posts.

APRIL 2024	APRIL 2025	APRIL 2026
241 FOLLOWERS	278 FOLLOWERS	355 FOLLOWERS
848 CONNECTIONS	1041 CONNECTIONS	664 CONNECTIONS(MN)
53 SUBSCRIBERS	204 SUBSCRIBERS	829 FOLLOWERS (MN)
		135 FOLLOWERS (AWHL)
		253 SUBSCRIBERS

We have also seen a tiny increase in uptake of our two weekly wellbeing boost emails.

	2024	2025	2026
HAPPY MONDAY	17	39	43
WEDNESDAY WELLBEING	16	37	40

Blogs written in '25 / '26 = 24

Our analytics show that those engaging with The Academy online are located all over the world. Most of our visitors are UK based, but we get people from the USA, Ireland and even Australia, Singapore and India.

The Academy of Wide-Hearted Living

NURTURE | EXPLORE | TRANSFORM

It's been a year of new collaborations, continued experimentation and leaning into some programmes that we know to work. Our focus for 2026/27 =

- building on the success of Wintering Well, developing a year-round community.
- continuing to evolve Time to Shine, adapting to meet the needs of this population of people who really want to live a different kind of life and to make a difference in the world.
- explore opportunities for bringing creativity and fun to more people, thereby improving their wellbeing
- exploring more grant funding, to create more financial stability

Huge thanks to our team of volunteers and directors for their support and guideance and cheerleading. I could not would not want to do this on my own. YOU make the Academy work and I am forever grateful for all you do.

Melissa

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