



# IMPACT REPORT 2023

**Community Led Initiatives** was formed in 2013 by Pete Atherton, our CEO, built on his experience of rebuilding his life after addiction, mental ill health, and involvement with the criminal justice system.

Now 10 years on, **CLI** is one of the leading peer-led mentoring and recovery support organisations in the country.

We are a lived experience organisation which means that large proportion of our staffing team have first-hand experience of the issues which many of our clients face. These personal insights provide our staff with an understanding of the barriers which our clients face and how best to go about overcoming them. We strongly believe in the value of lived experience and that is why we invest in providing a pathway for progression for those clients who aspire to work in this field and this can often result in them choosing to come back and volunteer with us, with a view to potentially progressing into one of our apprenticeship positions and then into a paid role within CLI.

All our services are built on a genuine co-production with the people we help. We share our lived experiences, connect people to a community of care and support and help them realise they are more than their pasts.

We apply a consistent and values-driven approach to all we do. Diligent recruitment, on-going development of our team through training, careful matching between mentor and mentee, and low caseloads deliver change for those we support. We would argue that this is what differentiates us from most other organisations in the same space.

Our success in supporting those we work with to overcome their challenges and achieve their goals in life is both what binds us and drives us on.



## Achieved a 77% successful completion rate\*

In 2022 we developed an impact measurement framework designed to allow us to understand how well we were delivering for those we support and to benchmark our performance findings year-on-year. Aligned with our organisational value of **excellence**, this comparative element of impact measurement allows us to both identify any potential performance issues, respond accordingly and build upon good practice.

Our annual outcomes research runs across all our contracts and whilst we encourage our clients to engage in the survey, participation is voluntary. The only eligibility criteria are that service users must have been working with us for one month or more.

This **Impact Report** summarises the 2023 annual impact survey findings, categorised into our **CLI** approach of **INSPIRE – TRANSFORM – FLOURISH**.

It is our first ever formal impact report. It has been published to mark the end of our 10th anniversary year, and to share the noteworthy outcomes our incredible team deliver for those we support.

\*a successful completion occurs when a mentee has achieved their action plan goals, an exit assessment has been completed which demonstrates that the mentee is ready to progress and next steps have been agreed

## In 2023, our 10th anniversary year, we:

- received over **2,000** referrals
- supported **1,482** people
- provided **10,866** hours of support
- delivered projects across **Greater Manchester, Liverpool, Shropshire, Bedfordshire** and **Milton Keynes**



## The CLI Theory of Change

Community Led Initiatives is a lived experience organisation that believes in the **capacity for human change**. We support those who have been through the criminal justice system, have been affected by drug and alcohol addiction, homelessness or mental health issues. We help them to **overcome the barriers preventing them from achieving their goals**.

### Inspire

We inspire people to believe that change is possible

We seek, recruit and develop employees who personify change as they will have encountered and overcome many of the barriers which the people we support will face. By making change visible this helps to inspire hope in others.



### Transform

Our approach to transformation

We provide one-to-one peer support and group work activities to help the people we work with to achieve their personal goals. In addition to addressing their practical and emotional needs we help them to develop a new positive sense of self.

## Proven Outcomes

Many of the people we work with go on to volunteer here at CLI to help build their CV, develop skills, gain meaningful work and bring utility to their past. And we are proud to say that a significant number of CLI mentoring programme graduates go on to become long term ambassadors for change.



### Flourish

By the end of our mentoring relationship, the people we work with feel empowered to move their lives forward independently and build upon the successes achieved with us. As a result of the transformational change undertaken, opportunities will present to them as their lives begin to flourish.

At **CLI** we use our collective lived experience of transformation to **INSPIRE** those we support to envisage a different life beyond the criminal justice system, addiction and homelessness.

As a lived experience organisation, we provide hope that change can be achieved.

Understanding why mentees engage with our support services is vital as it helps ensure we provide the right input and support to help those we work with succeed.

Without the basics in place such as ID, people are unable to apply for benefits, secure a place with a local doctor or open a bank account. We believe these essential practical outcomes to be the foundations of a socio-economically inclusive lifestyle and, therefore, a key pre-requisite for a life beyond criminality and addiction.

This important question highlights that, overwhelmingly, most respondents (86%) have not previously had access to quality, person-centred mentoring support, despite evidence which demonstrates the importance of mentoring in helping people to break the cycle of offending and addiction (Buck, 2021; Best et al. 2016)<sup>3</sup>.

## What are your motivations for engaging with CLI?

**66%** wanted practical support

**47%** wanted to change their life

**30%** wanted supportive mentors

**20%** wanted support with addiction recovery

**19%** wanted to improve their mental health

**9%** were encouraged by word of mouth

*(Respondents were able to choose multiple options)*

## Have you had access to a similar programme before working with CLI?



■ YES, I've had access ■ NO, I've not had access



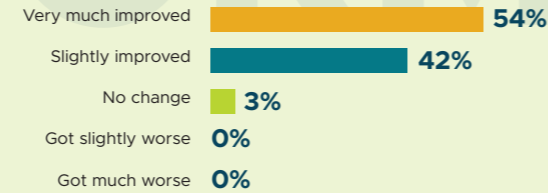
**98% experienced an improved quality of life**

At **CLI** we understand how hard it can be to **TRANSFORM** your life and the scale of change involved. We have experienced it.

Sharing our lived experience knowledge with those we support helps ensure they are better prepared for the challenge that is involved in leaving their past behind – physically, psychologically, and emotionally.



**Has your quality of life changed because of your work with CLI?**



**How has your quality of life improved?**

**Of those (98%) who experienced an improved quality of life**

34%	Feel supported - someone to turn to for practical and emotional help.
33%	Making progress with life admin and my financial security.
32%	Life feels more sorted out.
27%	Engaging with community more
24%	Improvements to my mental health
22%	Improved confidence in myself / mindset
14%	Improved accommodation

*(Respondents were able to choose multiple options)*

A growing research evidence base in the addiction recovery field asserts that empowerment, personal relations, social inclusion and self-determination are central to the experience of a positive quality of life and its impact on psychological wellbeing (De Maeyer et al. 2009, 2011)<sup>4</sup>.

Whilst we set out primarily to help the people we work with overcome addiction and desist from crime, our overarching objective is to support them to live more fulfilling and healthy lives - to **FLOURISH**.

Knowing that nearly all respondents stated their quality of life had very much or slightly improved, the positive impacts this has had for them on many areas of their lives reinforces our commitment to this vital outcome.

And whilst just under half of respondents stated that they had not started any new regular activities or hobbies since working with **CLI**, this reflects where many of the people we work with may be on their personal journey. Many struggle with social anxiety, others face childcare responsibilities, a lack of finance or suitable activities may not be available in their area.

In response, we are addressing some of these barriers in our service delivery, developing recovery communities in many of our project areas to identify activities, interventions and support groups which people in recovery can access and benefit from.

**ACTIVITIES**

**Have you started any new regular activities or hobbies since working with CLI? ?**

**New activity or hobby:**

**61%** started a new activity which promotes health and wellbeing

**19%** taken up a creative hobby or developed a new skill

**14%** now attending a regular support/ social group

**14%** now volunteering  
*(Respondents were able to choose multiple options)*

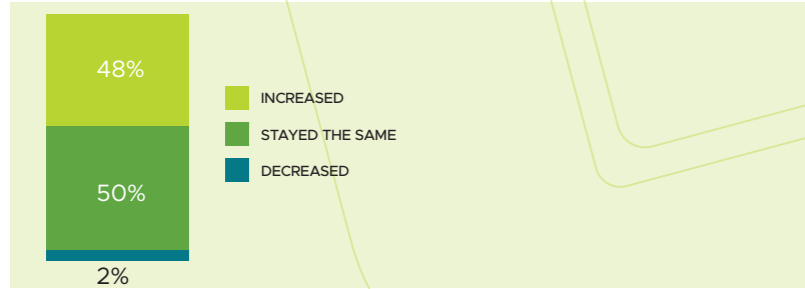


■ NO ■ YES

**To what extent have the number of quality relationships you have in your life changed because of CLI?**

98% of respondents stated that the number of quality relationships they had in their lives had increased or stayed the same as a result of working with CLI. Helping people we work with preserve their existing relationships and invest in new positive ones is important as this strengthens the social ties and support networks which are essential when times are tough.

Desistance studies have found rebuilding ties with family, friends and the wider community and developing new prosocial relationships are important aspects of desisting from crime (McNeil and Weaver, 2010)<sup>8</sup>. People are less likely to relapse or reoffend because they do not want to continue to let down the people they care about.

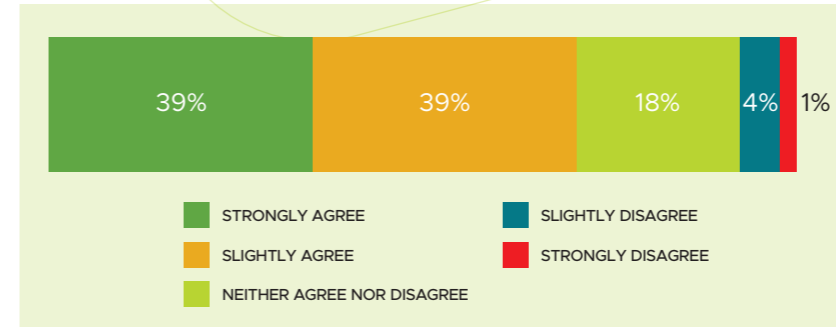


RELATIONSHIPS

**78% reported being better able to identify their qualities**

**“Because of CLI, I am better able to identify my good qualities.”**

Many of the people we work with have low self-esteem when we begin working with them. They have been told throughout their lives that they will amount to nothing, that they are a failure, that they are bad people, and these messages are often internalised. Our mentors help their mentee become comfortable with receiving praise, acknowledging the things they do well and over time develop their sense of self-worth. This is key for identity change, an essential component in recovery from addiction (Biernacki<sup>2</sup>, 1986; Best<sup>1</sup>, 2016) and desistance from crime (Maruna, 2001)<sup>7</sup>. It is therefore heartening to have 78% of respondents reporting that they feel better able to identify their good qualities.



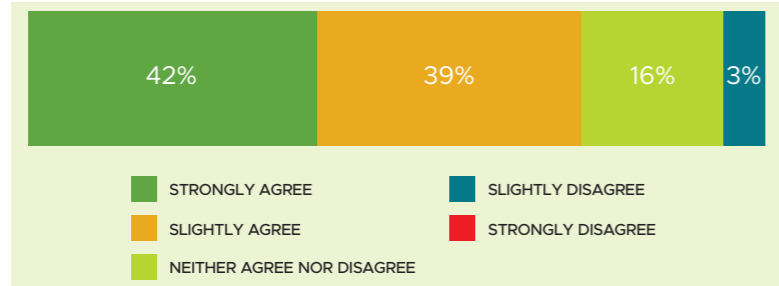
MY GOOD QUALITIES



**81% feel more confident about being accepted within my community**

We know from our lived experience change is only sustainable if those we support **FLOURISH** in their new lives. Whilst at **CLI** our primary objective is to help the people we work with overcome addiction and desist from crime, our overarching goal is to support them to live more fulfilling and healthy lives. That's why for us, **FLOURISH** is not only about the person but also their community, their family, their support group.

**Working with CLI has made me feel more confident about being accepted within my community.**



According to the World Health Organisation illicit drug use is the most stigmatised health condition in the world, with alcohol dependence the fourth (WHO 2001)<sup>9</sup>. For ex-offenders, having a criminal conviction is widely recognized as presenting a societal barrier which is difficult to overcome and can derail desistance efforts (LeBel et al. 2008; Unlock, 2023)<sup>6</sup>.

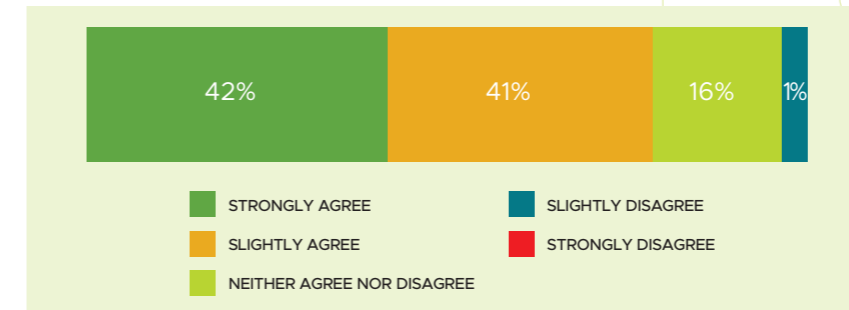
We help those we work with develop their self-esteem and support them to engage in activities and hobbies which will help them develop their community capital. The positive impact of this work is reflected in 81% of respondents feeling more confident about being accepted within their community.

**83% felt better able to find solutions to problems when they come up as a result of working with CLI**

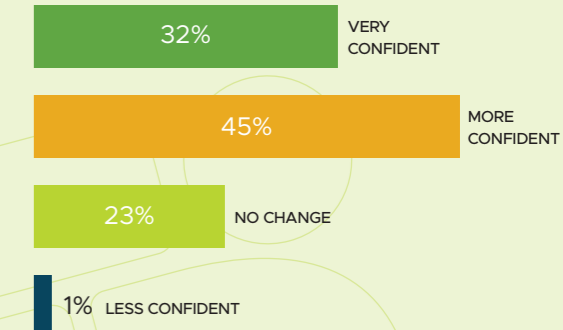
Resilience is key to recovery and transformation. We work with those we support to help them better understand the relationship between failing to manage stress and problems effectively and the negative impact this has on their emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. We also adopt people to adopt relevant stress-management techniques from problem-solving to meditation.

We're delighted that this is reflected in 77% of those in our impact survey feeling very confident or more confident in their ability to cope with the challenges of day-to-day life because of the support they received from **CLI**.

**“Because of CLI, I am better able to find solutions to problems when they come up.”**



**How confident are you with your ability to cope with the challenges of day-to-day life as a result of the support you have received from CLI?**



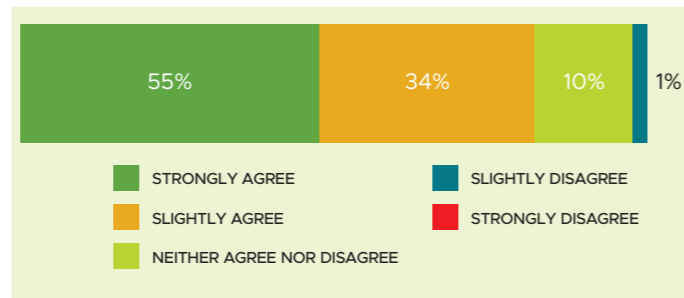
**77% reported that they now feel more confident with their ability to cope with the challenges of day-to-day life as a result of the support you have received from CLI**

**89% reported that since working with CLI, I am more excited about what might happen in my life in the future**

Our approach to helping ensure those we support flourish is built upon the fact that hope is the catalyst for positive change.

Our highly motivated and lived experience team help the people we work with overcome the barriers they face, whilst simultaneously supporting them to build their social, human and recovery capital. As our outcomes data clearly shows, the majority (88%) agree that since working with CLI they feel more positive and hopeful about their future lives. We're proud of this transformational delivery.

**“Since working with CLI, I am more excited about what might happen in my life in the future.”**



# Inspire Transform Flourish



MY FUTURE

**And finally .....**

Aligned with our organisational value of **People First**, the opinion of those we support is paramount to us.

Many of the people we work with have been failed by numerous organisations prior to engaging with us. Given this it is especially rewarding to know we are delivering on our promises and that the inspire, transform and flourish approach to our work is helping to break the cycle of reoffending and addiction relapse rates.

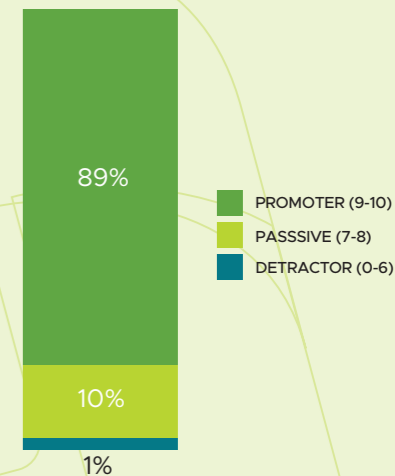
**Our Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 88 ranks CLI as excellent** and confirms those we support are highly satisfied with our service and the outcomes we help them achieve.

Having this positive endorsement from our mentees is the most important outcome for us.

*“You helped me in so many areas of my life and I feel like you gave me the skills that I needed to go on and live a more independent life. I am now way more confident in myself. You were very accommodating and always knew what to do and how to resolve my problems. There are loads of other people that need support so I would absolutely send them in your/ CLI's direction.”*

MENTEE SATISFACTION

**Mentee satisfaction: how likely are you to recommend CLI's support to someone else who needs it? (Net Promoter Score [NPS])**



Based on a scale of 0-10, where 0 is least likely and 10 is most likely

NPS is calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters.

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The data from our annual impact survey 2023 overwhelmingly demonstrates that we are having a positive impact upon the lives of the people we work with and, as a result, we would confidently assert that the rippling effect upon their local communities and the wider society is equally positive.

As our 2023 survey findings are largely in line with our 2022 survey findings, we are assured that the quality of work we are delivered is consistently excellent.

Whilst this in itself is commendable and reflective of the hard work, passion and competence of the people who work within **CLI**, the fact that this consistent level of quality delivery has been achieved in the aftermath of covid and during times of increased austerity, both of which have undoubtedly impacted upon the complexity and level of need for the people we work with, further enhances the magnitude of what has been achieved by **CLI** over this period.

As an organisation we constantly strive for excellence. Our plan is to use this data and feedback to identify any opportunities for improvement in the support we provide for our service users and the skills of our outstanding team.

And as a lived experience organisation we are also working hard to address the structural barriers in society by advocating on behalf of the people we work with and positively challenging the negative perceptions of people in recovery and ex-offenders. We want to make recovery and desistance visible and do so in a way which enables the public to be better informed about what is achievable for those who have been in addiction and/or transgressed the law.

“**Look at me now. My mentor has made me more positive, and I enjoy coming out to meet them to talk and go to the group. I’m getting out more, doing more.**”

- References:** (1) Best, D. Irving, J. and Albertson, K. (2016). Recovery and desistance: what the emerging recovery movement in the alcohol and drug area can learn from models of desistance from offending. *Addiction Theory and Research*, 25 (1), 1-10.
- (2) Biernacki, P. (1986) *Pathways from heroin addiction: recovery without treatment*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press
- (3) Buck, G. (2021) *Mentoring and peer mentoring*. Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation.
- (4) De Maeyer, J., Vanderplasschen, W. and Broekaert, E. (2009) Exploratory study on drug users’ perspectives on

“**I’m volunteering at the mustard tree [a charity which aims to combat and prevent poverty, inequality and homelessness across Greater Manchester] in the warehouse and regularly attend Back-on-Track [a Greater Manchester charity that enables people to make positive changes that last] for support.**”

- quality of life: more than health related quality of life? *Soc Indic Res.* 90:107–126.
- (5) De Maeyer, J., Vandesplasschen, W., Lammertyn, J., van Nieuwehuizen, C., Sabbe, B. and Broekaert, E. (2011) Current quality of life and its determinants among opiate-dependent individuals five years after starting methadone treatment. *Qual Life Res.* 20:139–150
- (6) LeBel, T., Burnett, R., Maruna, S. and Bushway S. (2008) The ‘chicken and egg’ of subjective and social factors in desistance from crime. *European Journal of Criminology.* 5:131–159
- (7) Maruna, S. (2001) *Making Good: How Ex-Convicts*

“**Although I suffer from my mental health still, I don’t feel like I am as depressed. I have got more confidence in leaving the house and going out into the community. That is something so simple, but before I wouldn’t have dreamed of doing that whereas now, I can do it without as many barriers.**”

- Reform and Rebuild their Lives, Washington DC: American Psychological Association Books.
- (8) McNeil, F. and Weaver, B. (2010) *Changing Lives: Desistance Research and Offender Management*, <http://www.sccjr.ac.uk/pubs/Changing-Lives-Desistance-Research-and-OffenderManagement/255>
- Unlock (2023) *Why we need reform of the criminal records system. Unlock briefing.* Accessible: [Why-we-need-reform-of-the-criminal-records-system.-Unlock-briefing-February-2023.pdf](https://www.unlock.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Why-we-need-reform-of-the-criminal-records-system.-Unlock-briefing-February-2023.pdf)
- (9) World Health Organisation (2001) *The World Health Report. Mental Health: new understandings, new hope.* Geneva: World Health Organisation





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For information about CLI  
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