



**The Life Rooms at The Liverpool Playhouse  
Theatre: Preliminary evaluation of the pilot,  
6 January – 17 March 2020**

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## List of abbreviations, figures and tables

### Abbreviations

Core partner (organisation)s	Mersey Care, Everyman & Playhouse and University of Liverpool
E&P	Everyman & Playhouse
E&P data	Data collected by Everyman & Playhouse contained in the E&P workbook
E&P workbook	An Excel workbook containing E&P and The Life Rooms data on sessions delivery and participation, general footfall, etc.
Everyman & Playhouse	Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse Theatres
Life Rooms staff	Mersey Care staff working at The Life Rooms
LR data	Data collected by The Life Rooms contained in the E&P workbook
LR-C	The Life Rooms creative wellbeing learning sessions
LR-W	The Life Rooms mental health and wellbeing learning sessions
Members	The Life Rooms registered members
Mersey Care	Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust
Mersey Care Report	Membership, session contact and social prescribing data provided by Mersey Care
NHS	National Health Service
Online Survey	The Liverpool Playhouse Life Rooms Staff and Volunteer Survey
Pathways Advice	The Life Rooms social prescribing service
Life Rooms LO	The Life Rooms Learning Offer
The Pilot Life Rooms	The Life Rooms pilot at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre
UoL	University of Liverpool

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## Executive Summary

This report documents the findings of a preliminary evaluation of The Life Rooms pilot at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre (The Pilot Life Rooms), which ran on Mondays and Tuesdays between 6 January and 17 March 2020. The Pilot Life Rooms is a collaboration between Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust, Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse Theatres and The University of Liverpool.

The Life Rooms Social Model of Health acknowledges the role society plays in the wellbeing of the population. The Life Rooms response encompasses three pillars: social prescribing, learning and community.

The pilot aimed to (1) understand how the use of a city centre arts location, The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre, can support the delivery of The Life Rooms model, (2) see if a working theatre can be used as a community space during the daytime while also operating as a working theatre at night, and (3) combine the expertise and experience of the arts-health-research partnership to co-design, co-deliver and co-evaluate the creative-learning programme to be offered there.

We know that the Life Rooms model works elsewhere. This evaluation asked, *“How has the Life Rooms model worked in a new space – a working theatre in Liverpool city centre?”*.

The evaluation had ethical approval from The University of Liverpool School of the Arts Research Ethics Committee. The data came from routine The Life Rooms data collection (registers, feedback sheets, box office and general footfall), session attendance data gathered by Everyman & Playhouse at end of each day, and a bespoke online survey of The Pilot Life Rooms volunteers and staff. Quantitative data were analysed through descriptive statistics. Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis.

This evaluation has demonstrated the value of running a Life Rooms at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre, an iconic building in Liverpool City Centre. The offer at The Pilot Life Rooms was valued by members, volunteers and staff, and evidence suggests that members grew in confidence and feelings of self-worth alongside developing relationships and mutual support with others. People enjoyed the creative sessions on offer from all partners. Volunteers and staff enjoyed the passion and enthusiasm of the partners, the strengths each partner brought to the collaboration, and the sense of community that was developing at The Pilot Life Rooms.

Challenges included providing confidential spaces, noise transference between spaces, balance between the theatre’s creative wellbeing offer and The Life Rooms’ Learning Offer, logistical issues of WiFi, temperature control, safeguarding, daily set up and session delivery, and issues relating to the bringing together of organisations with very different expectations of governance arrangements, data collection procedures, goals and priorities.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought the pilot to a premature close at the theatre. It is hoped that The Life Rooms will resume at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre when it is safe to do so. With this in mind, we offer the following recommendations to the partners.

1. Improve marketing and promotion of the service
2. Involve staff and volunteers in session planning and delivery, ensuring a balance between creative wellbeing and The Life Room Learning Offer sessions
3. Strengthen working relationships between the core partners
4. Enhance the physical space of the theatre and its use as a Life Rooms.

## Introduction

There is an identified lack of meaningful daytime accessible activities for adults in the Merseyside ‘ring of deprivation’ who suffer with issues of poverty, poor mental health, worklessness, reduced access to services, low confidence and low self-esteem. Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse Theatres (Everyman & Playhouse) and Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust (Mersey Care) are seeking to tackle this by turning a working theatre into a city-centre version of Mersey Care’s “The Life Rooms” model.

This report documents the findings of a preliminary evaluation of The Life Rooms pilot at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre (The Pilot Life Rooms), which ran between 6 January and 17 March 2020.

## Roles of the Evaluation Team

The authors of this report are the Evaluation Team, responsible for designing the evaluation, gathering data, analysis, write-up and dissemination.

The evaluation is funded through the English Department of The University of Liverpool. This funding enabled the delivery of creative sessions by University of Liverpool employees as well as the evaluation itself. Sue Povall (SP) and Sam Solnick (SS) were both involved in the delivery of sessions at The Pilot Life Rooms. SP led on a number of Story Spinning sessions and also ran some drop-in story sessions where members of The Pilot Life Rooms (Members) could sit with her and tell stories from their own lives or create stories using props. She also told stories during some Storytime sessions, and helped to identify other storytellers for this drop-in service. SS supported Story Spinning and Writing for Wellbeing sessions.

The University of Liverpool has led on the evaluation of The Pilot Life Rooms. The co-delivery of creative sessions is an important part of the partnership between The University of Liverpool and Everyman & Playhouse. It does mean that as evaluators we are less distanced from the operation of The Pilot Life Rooms than independent evaluators would be. This has both benefits and dis-benefits. The benefits are that we are more familiar with the operation of The Pilot Life Rooms and are aware of discussions that took place in debrief sessions at the close of The Life Rooms on the days we attended. Both SP and SS attended The Pilot Life Rooms on most of the Mondays that it operated at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre and so were known to Mersey Care staff and volunteers, Everyman & Playhouse staff, and Members. The dis-benefits are the potential for greater subjectivity in reporting the findings and the potential for participants in the evaluation to be less open about any negative feelings they may have about The Pilot Life Rooms as both SP and SS were familiar to them. We designed the evaluation to minimise both of these potential issues.

The specific roles of each member of the Evaluation Team are as follows:

- SP – lead researcher and lead author ... evaluation design, ethics approval, survey design and implementation, quantitative and qualitative data analyses, write-up
- SS – project lead ... evaluation design, ethics approval, survey testing, write-up, dissemination
- CR – Mersey Care lead ... evaluation design, Mersey Care data collection, write-up, dissemination
- RRW – Everyman & Playhouse lead ... evaluation design, Everyman & Playhouse data collection, write-up, dissemination
- JB – academic lead ... evaluation design, ethics approval, survey testing, write-up, dissemination

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Mersey Care and Everyman & Playhouse staff and volunteers and The Pilot Life Rooms members for making us welcome and for their openness in responding to the evaluation.

## The Life Rooms

(This section is drawn from The Life Rooms Annual Report 2019)

The Life Rooms prioritises a non-clinical and community-focused approach. The ethos of The Life Rooms is one that embraces informality and reduces barriers to access. Those accessing The Life Rooms do not have to meet any specific criteria and should feel that they can access as much or as little of The Life Rooms community as they like.

The Life Rooms has developed an offer that weaves between and comes alongside existing service provision, supporting those that are struggling to access services, those that fall through the gaps, those that seek more than standard interventions, and those that are moving away from services altogether. The Life Rooms supports people to take the next steps in their life, whatever they may be.

The Life Rooms Social Model of Health acknowledges the role society plays in the wellbeing of the population. The Life Rooms offers a response that includes empowering people to understand and be supported with their individual social situation, as well as to mobilise change through providing an alternative model within social systems and structures that can so often cause distress. This encompasses three pillars: social prescribing, learning and community.

Barnes and Mercer<sup>1</sup> write that ‘alternative spaces are where most effective change is enacted’. The Life Rooms offers an alternative reimagining of service provision; it aims to work with personhood and humanity over diagnosis and intervention.

The Life Rooms were established in Walton, Liverpool and have now expanded to sites in Southport, Bootle and South Liverpool. Focus groups<sup>2</sup> with participants in The Life Rooms services found that the care provided there provided a space to “just ‘be’”, that the services were accessible, the ethos encouraged social inclusion and connectedness and helped participants move towards self-determination and independence.

## The Life Rooms at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre

The Life Rooms has been piloted at The Playhouse Theatre in Williamson Square (The Pilot Life Rooms), a city centre location next to St John’s Shopping Centre and Queens Square Bus Station in Liverpool. The pilot ran on Mondays and Tuesdays during January, February and the first three weeks of March 2020, at a time of day when the theatre was generally underused. The Pilot Life Rooms was intended to run from January – March 2020. It was hoped that the pilot would be extended to the end of October 2020. However, this was not possible face-to-face because of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

### Partner aims

The Pilot Life Rooms is a collaboration between Mersey Care, Everyman & Playhouse and The University of Liverpool’s Department of English (University of Liverpool). The overarching aim of The Pilot Life Rooms was to combine the expertise and experience of the arts-health-research partnership to co-design, co-deliver and co-evaluate the creative-learning programme to be offered there. In addition to this, each core partner had their own aims and goals for The Pilot Life Rooms, which are presented below.

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<sup>1</sup> Barnes, C. and Mercer, G., 2006. Independent Futures. Creating User-led Disability Services in a Disabling Society. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 8(4), pp.317–320. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1080/15017410600973523>

<sup>2</sup> Hassan, S.M., Giebel, C., Morasae, E.K. *et al.* Social prescribing for people with mental health needs living in disadvantaged communities: The Life Rooms model. *BMC Health Serv Res* **20**, 19 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-019-4882-7>.

### The Life Rooms aims:

- To expand The Life Rooms model to a city centre location within a well-known cultural landmark.
- To understand how use of a city centre arts location can support the delivery of The Life Rooms model.

The Life Rooms places great importance on environment in relation to the delivery of its model. Community, which is one of the ‘three pillars’ of The Life Rooms approach, emphasises the need for people to have safe and welcoming spaces in which to build connection. The Pilot Life Rooms offered the opportunity to explore the value of this approach within a city-centre arts location. The notion of community shifts and changes depending on the context in which it sits. A city centre venue provided a different configuration of community than Life Rooms sites situated elsewhere. Additionally, the use of a well-known arts venue added an additional dimension to The Life Rooms environment and offered a challenge to traditional service contexts. Therefore, exploring how The Life Rooms model was delivered within this context was a key aim for the service in this pilot.

### Everyman & Playhouse aims:

- To pilot the use of The Playhouse Theatre as a community space during the daytime while also operating as a working theatre at night. The longer-term aspiration is to become a national exemplar in transforming a major cultural theatre space into dual use with a leading Mental Health Trust.
- To develop a partnership with a leading health trust with a focus on mental health and wellbeing to respond to the articulated need for daytime wellbeing activities.
- To develop collaborative practice involving arts and mental health and wellbeing with a longer-term aim of drawing down research funding.
- To evidence the impact of theatre and mental health and wellbeing collaborative practice.
- To identify modifications to the theatre space for further development in a more sustained offer to inform capital development of The Playhouse.
- To support the city centre by providing a permanent weekly programme of activities at The Playhouse that vulnerable adults can be signposted to from the Theatres’ intensive engagement projects and from local partners. An emphasis will be placed on engagement with vulnerable and marginalized groups, such as the homeless. The longer-term aim is to evidence the need for a city centre provision for adult engagement (for creative skill development, wellbeing and support) to lever funding to develop this into a sustainable model.

Everyman & Playhouse is a charity with a national reputation for engaging some of the city’s most marginalized groups including refugees and asylum seekers, carers, people in recovery from drugs/alcohol, criminal justice, homeless and sex workers. With local communities of people, creative activities are co-created both in the community and in the Theatres’ spaces (2 auditoriums, 2 studios and public spaces) which focus on skills and wellbeing involving 30,000+ people a year. However, in 2019, 90% of community engagement within the Theatres was taking place at the Everyman Theatre and only about 10% at the Playhouse.

With a new artistic vision and business plan, there is a focus on civic engagement and within that the development of The Playhouse daytime use as a creative community resource.

### The University of Liverpool's aims:

- to give UoL staff experience of delivering sessions at The Pilot Life Rooms and of working with vulnerable service users.



- to find out whether the creative writing offering delivered at The Pilot Life Rooms would benefit from being based on the University's academic research.

The UoL's primary role in this pilot were as evaluators. It was decided that that the evaluation would benefit from UoL staff not only observing some of the arts-based sessions but delivering their own sessions based on their own expertise – SP is a trained oral storyteller and SS teaches literature and creative writing. As such, one subsidiary aim for the pilot from a UoL perspective was to find out whether the creation and delivery of creative-writing sessions would benefit from drawing on research expertise from within the department of English, particularly in relation to Literature and Mental Health and Literature and Nature. SS aimed to deliver these as a programme of 'Nature Writing for Wellbeing' creative-writing sessions.

### **The Pilot Life Rooms Offer**

Programmes of activities were developed in partnership between Mersey Care The Life Rooms staff (The Life Rooms staff) and Everyman & Playhouse with the aim of combining The Life Rooms Learning Offer (Life Rooms LO) and social prescribing services with creative sessions facilitated by Everyman & Playhouse. The planned offer for each month is included in Appendix 1.

Life Rooms LO provides free learning provision within all sites. Courses and groups range from supporting people to understand and manage mental distress to more social and creative offerings. Within the learning offer at The Life Rooms, there is a strong focus on experiential and informal learning practices. The learning provision takes account of the value of lived experience, in terms of content and facilitation; it also harnesses the power of group approaches to distress, which prioritises sharing of experiences and relationship building.

Social prescribing support at The Life Rooms is offered through The Pathways Advice service. Pathways Advisors offer a wide range of support to users of The Life Rooms. The support on offer is provided by Pathways Advisors themselves or by external partners, largely consisting of community and voluntary organisations. Pathways Advisors commonly provide support in the following areas: mental and physical wellbeing, housing, employment, benefits, volunteering and developing social interactions.

The collaboration between Everyman & Playhouse, an arts institution, and the University of Liverpool included the provision of creative activities to the programme based on drama, writing and storytelling to foster wellbeing.

The provision offered in January 2020 was a series of taster session and open days to raise awareness of The Pilot Life Rooms. Several groups that already worked with Everyman & Playhouse were invited to take part in taster sessions, as well as members of the public, volunteers and people working for the core partner organisations (Mersey Care, Everyman & Playhouse and The University of Liverpool) wanting to experience the arts-based sessions on offer. In February and early March, there was a formal and regular schedule of activities open to registered members of The Life Rooms.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, The Pilot Life Rooms face-to-face activities were paused on 17th March 2020 in keeping with Government guidelines, although no sessions were delivered on the 17th March, rather on that day space was made available for people to meet and talk. Online sessions were developed to continue The Pilot Life Rooms provision during the lockdown, which has led to the launch of a "Digital Life Rooms" in October 2020.

### **The Pilot Life Rooms visitor experience**

Upon arrival at the Playhouse, visitors were received by staff members of both Everyman and Playhouse, and Life Rooms, and also by Life Rooms volunteers.



New members were able to enquire about the activities on offer, to sign up to courses and sessions and were shown around the building. Existing members were free to access the café area on the first floor, and to be called into their chosen session by the facilitators prior to the session starting.

The building spaces were carefully managed and staffed to ensure user safety and comfort. The café space was a central focal point within the building, with sessions and appointments taking place in a variety of different locations.

## Evaluation

### Background

The University of Liverpool led on co-designing the methodology for evidencing and evaluating the project's benefits to both partners and the community. Representatives from Mersey Care and Everyman & Playhouse also input into the design and provided attendance data and case studies.

Due to time constraints in both the funding and delivery of The Pilot Life Rooms, the evaluation has been limited to an NHS Service Evaluation<sup>3</sup> framework, conducting secondary analyses of routinely collected quantitative and qualitative data supplemented with an online survey of staff and volunteers delivering The Pilot Life Rooms coordination and activities, The Liverpool Playhouse Life Rooms Staff and Volunteer Survey (Online Survey).

This evaluation is limited to the two and half months of face-to-face activity at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre due to funding and staff time constraints, and because this better represents the normal planned operation of The Life Rooms in Liverpool: the provision of a community service in a working city-centre theatre at a time of day when the theatre is generally underused. The evaluation is specifically limited to the time frame of 06/01/2020 – 10/03/2020 as, because of the rapid shut down of activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, data are not available for the final two days of operation (16th and 17th March 2020).

### Evaluation Questions, Aims and Objectives

Evaluation Question:

*We know that the Life Rooms model works elsewhere. How has the Life Rooms model worked in a new space – a working theatre in Liverpool city centre?*

Evaluation aims: To understand, during the evaluation period,

1. How many people used The Pilot Life Rooms?
2. What were the participants experiences of The Pilot Life Rooms provision?
3. What were the experiences of staff and volunteers?
4. What has been the experience of running a Life Rooms in partnership with an arts institution?
5. How might the provision of The Pilot Life Rooms be strengthened?

Objectives:

1. To analyse, using descriptive statistics, routinely collected quantitative data from attendance records to determine the numbers of people using The Pilot Life Rooms, generally, for the Pathways Advice service (social prescribing) and for individual activities (learning). (Evaluation Aim 1).

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/research/docs/DefiningResearchTable\\_Oct2017-1.pdf](http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/research/docs/DefiningResearchTable_Oct2017-1.pdf)

2. To analyse, using descriptive statistics, the quantifiable responses on routinely collected feedback sheets to determine participant responses to learning activities and The Pilot Life Rooms offer overall. (Evaluation Aim 2).
3. To analyse, through thematic analysis, qualitative responses on routinely collected feedback sheets to identify the participants views on learning activities and The Pilot Life Rooms offer overall. (Evaluation Aim 2).
4. To thematically analyse anonymised, routinely collected case studies collected by Mersey Care to identify the strengths and weaknesses of The Pilot Life Rooms offer. (Evaluation Aim 2).
5. To conduct an online survey with staff and volunteers working at The Pilot Life Rooms at the beginning of April 2020 to understand their experiences of delivering the service and suggestions for how it could be strengthened. Quantitative responses will be analysed using descriptive statistics; qualitative responses will be subject to thematic analysis. (Evaluation Aim 3).
6. To include a free-text question in the online survey to explore with the key partners (Mersey Care, Everyman & Playhouse, The University of Liverpool) the provision of a Life Rooms in an arts institution (Evaluation Aim 4).
7. To combine learning from 1-6 to produce an evaluation report to be shared with appropriate parties at Mersey Care, Everyman & Playhouse and The University of Liverpool. (Evaluation Aim 5). This report will also inform a more robust evaluation of future The Pilot Life Rooms provision.

## Ethical Approval

The University of Liverpool members of the Evaluation Team received expedited ethical approval for this research from The University of Liverpool School of the Arts Research Ethics Committee on 11 May 2020.

### Ethical considerations

All routinely collected data provided to the Evaluation Team by Mersey Care and Everyman & Playhouse or collected through the Online Survey are completely anonymous, and often aggregated, and it is not possible to identify individual participants from the data.

Anonymised, aggregated data collected by Mersey Care have been shared with The University of Liverpool on the understanding that any articles using these data will be sent to Mersey Care for approval before they are submitted for publication (see Appendix 2).

Everyman & Playhouse have provided a volunteer case study. This is the story of one person's experiences of The Life Rooms. It is provided by Everyman & Playhouse on the understanding that the individual will not be identified and care has been taken to use extracts that highlight the person's experiences but that do not use information that could lead to their identification. Similarly, testimony from a member of staff from The Life Rooms has been provided by Mersey Care. This was already anonymised.

Members of The Pilot Life Rooms are, in many cases, vulnerable individuals for whom the staff and Evaluation Team have a duty of care. We did not have the time to seek full ethical approval so that we might include the voices of these people directly in this evaluation. Instead, we are relying on responses on The Life Rooms feedback sheets and vicarious reports of Member / session participant experiences reported in the Online Survey to look at Member experiences of The Pilot Life Rooms. This is clearly limited in that no Member / session participant has had the opportunity to fully consider the opportunities and limitations of The Pilot Life Rooms directly. A future evaluation will seek to address this.

SP, SS and RRW all delivered sessions at The Pilot Life Rooms and have developed working relationships with staff, volunteers and Members who attended there. They have all heard personal stories from these people. There is the potential that this will inform decisions taken in the analysis of qualitative data gathered as part

of the evaluation. All of the qualitative analysis has been done by SP with no systematic cross-checking by another member of the Evaluation Team. All Evaluation Team members have received a PDF of The Liverpool Playhouse Life Rooms Staff and Volunteer Survey responses as well as drafts of the report and have been able to ensure that the analyses represent all voices. Rigorous methods, described below, have enabled SP to minimise any potential bias in analysing the data and reporting the findings<sup>4</sup>.

It is established practice in qualitative research for the researchers to provide a summary of their experiences that may influence their position in relation to the research process (positionality). SP offers her positionality as lead researcher so that the readers may judge for themselves the extent to which this has introduced bias into the findings:

SP retired from The University of Liverpool Department of Public Health, Policy and Systems at the end of June 2020 after working as a qualitative researcher there for 13 years. Her work in public health focused on policy options to reduce health inequalities. She is a white, middle-aged, middle-class woman who has travelled extensively. She is not an addict, nor has she been homeless, but she has struggled with her mental health at times. She is an oral storyteller. Working at The Pilot Life Rooms as a storyteller, delivering workshops and telling stories, has been exciting and enjoyable for her, and presented an opportunity for her to develop as an artist. SP admires the aims of The Pilot Life Rooms and the openness of the conversations she heard in debrief session and the commitment she saw among staff and volunteers to its delivery.

## Methods

The evaluation was based on secondary analyses of anonymised data collected routinely by Mersey Care and Everyman & Playhouse, and primary analyses of data gathered through the Online Survey by The University of Liverpool. Both sets of data have quantitative and qualitative elements. These are described below.

### Data collection

#### a) Data shared by Mersey Care (Mersey Care Report)

It is standard practice at The Life Rooms venues to collect attendance registers for Life Rooms Learning Offer (this was known as “Recovery College” at the time of data collection; both terms are used in the appendices) sessions (see Appendix 3) and to ask participants to complete a feedback sheet at the end of each session as part of their routine evaluation (see Appendix 4). In addition, data are collected on social prescribing activities (Pathways Advice). These data have been shared with the Evaluation Team in the form of a report (referred to as the “Mersey Care Report” in later text). Note that at The Pilot Life Rooms, these data were collected sporadically in January taster sessions and more consistently in February and March programmed sessions. The Mersey Care Report contained the following information:

#### Routine service usage data relating to The Life Rooms services

Learning provision (Life Rooms LO and creative wellbeing sessions): Number of enrolments; number of sessions; number of student contacts.

Social prescribing provision (Pathways Advice): Number of face-to-face contacts; source of referral; support offered (volunteering/housing/debt etc.).

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<sup>4</sup> Green J and Thorogood N (2018) *Qualitative Methods for Health Research*, 4th Edition. Sage Publishing.

### Routine evaluation data relating to The Life Rooms services

Evaluation form data relating to learning provision: Quantitative overview of how people found the courses, sample comments from the participants. There is also a testimony from a member of The Life Rooms staff.

In addition to the summary contained in the Mersey Care Report, Mersey Care provided a spreadsheet with summarised raw data from the feedback sheets, including information on which courses the participants attended and documents containing all comments entered into the form.

#### **b) Data shared by Everyman & Playhouse (E&P Workbook)**

On each day that The Pilot Life Rooms ran, The Life Rooms staff collected information on general footfall and new The Life Rooms memberships and Everyman & Playhouse staff collected information on enquiries at The Liverpool Playhouse Box Office.

At the end of each day, there was a debrief meeting in the café for staff from the partner organisations. This was an opportunity to discuss any issues that had emerged during the day, to support staff who might have had difficult experiences and to gather data on course attendance. Both The Life Rooms and Everyman & Playhouse staff recorded which sessions / services had run and how many attendees there had been at each. Both compiled this information independently into their respective data bases.

Detailed, anonymised, aggregated data from these two sources were supplied to the University of Liverpool investigators at date and course/service level by Everyman & Playhouse in an Excel workbook (E&P workbook). These data allowed a comparison between planned session / service delivery and actual session / service delivery, as well as a breakdown in attendance by The Life Rooms and Everyman & Playhouse facilitated sessions. The E&P workbook contained the following sheets:

- Sheet 1: Everyman & Playhouse data listing all sessions that took place at the theatre, by date, whether delivered by Everyman & Playhouse or The Life Rooms staff, and the number of participants in each session. Numbers of Pathways Advice participants are also included. There is a summary table comparing totals collected by Everyman & Playhouse and The Life Rooms staff.
- Sheet 2: The Life Rooms data for January listing the sessions that took place, how many were wellbeing (The Life Rooms) and how many were creative wellbeing (Everyman & Playhouse), summary attendance figures by date broken out by general footfall, Pathways Advice, session contacts (participants) (wellbeing, creative wellbeing), general enquiries, new The Life Rooms registrations and ticket enquiries.
- Sheet 3: The Life Rooms data for February listing the sessions that took place, how many were wellbeing (The Life Rooms) and how many were creative wellbeing (Everyman & Playhouse), summary attendance figures by date broken out by general footfall, Pathways Advice, session contacts (participants) (wellbeing, creative wellbeing), general enquiries, new The Life Rooms registrations and ticket enquiries.
- Sheet 4: The Life Rooms data for March listing the sessions that took place, how many were wellbeing (The Life Rooms) and how many were creative wellbeing (Everyman & Playhouse), summary attendance figures by date broken out by Pathways Advice, session contacts (participants) (wellbeing, creative wellbeing), general enquiries, new The Life Rooms registrations and ticket enquiries. The data end on 10 March.

In addition, Everyman & Playhouse shared a volunteer case study captured through The Life Rooms case study template, used for collecting individual experience data for marketing/report purposes.

#### **c) Data collected by The University of Liverpool**

The University of Liverpool investigators developed an online survey (The Liverpool Playhouse Life Rooms Staff and Volunteer Survey) using the JISC Online Survey software to capture the experiences of staff,

volunteers and independent session facilitators at The Pilot Life Rooms. It had been intended to supplement this with focus groups with staff from the core partners. The COVID-19 pandemic lockdown prevented face-to-face meetings. An online focus group was planned, and had ethical approval, but we were unable to plan and deliver this focus group due to time (SP's retirement) constraints. Instead, a question was added to the survey for staff from the core partners to answer. This question (6a) gave the opportunity for these respondents to reflect on the partnership itself. Beyond this, the survey aimed to garner information on the experiences of staff, volunteers and independent session facilitators on the operation of The Pilot Life Rooms, where the challenges had been, what had worked well and areas for improvement. The survey questions are included in Appendix 5.

## Inclusion criteria

### **Routine data collected by Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust and Everyman & Playhouse**

All data gathered during the two and half months of the operation of The Pilot Life Rooms (6 January – 10 March 2020) by Mersey Care and Everyman & Playhouse were shared with The University of Liverpool investigators.

### **The Liverpool Playhouse Life Rooms Staff and Volunteer Survey**

All staff, volunteers and independent session facilitators working at The Pilot Life Rooms were eligible to participate in the Online Survey. Only those people who received the URL for the survey were able to complete it.

## Data analyses

### **Quantitative data**

Quantitative data are described using frequencies in tables or bar charts. Data from the Mersey Care Report have been tabulated at source. Figures from the Online Survey are taken from a PDF generated by the JISC Online Survey software platform used to create the survey.

The E&P Workbook has been the source of analyses to explore which sessions were planned and which ran at The Pilot Life Rooms, how many people attended the sessions that ran, which organisations led on the delivery of those sessions, and how the data collected compares between Mersey Care, The Life Rooms and Everyman & Playhouse sources. Before these data could be used, they needed to be cleaned a little. SP has amended the Everyman & Playhouse data in the following ways:

1. Data relating to before 7th January and after 10th March have been deleted as they are outside the evaluation period.
2. Data for informal conversations between members of the public and Mersey Care staff to discuss The Life Rooms service on 7th January Outreach Day (99 contacts) and 13th January Open Day (42 contacts) have been deleted as these were not attendances at timetabled activities. Such informal conversations were also not recorded for subsequent open days.
3. One record for the Pathways service had been duplicated and so the duplicate was deleted.
4. Data were missing for the courses run by the University of Liverpool (Writing for Wellbeing, Story Spinning and Stories drop-in). More of these sessions were run than were included in the dataset. The data have been amended accordingly.

The amended Everyman & Playhouse data (Sheet 1) was used to create two further spreadsheets: one listing the sessions by session name, and one listing the sessions by date. The first of these new spreadsheets was used to create a list of the sessions that ran at The Pilot Life Rooms during the evaluation period, included in

the findings section below. The second new spreadsheet was combined with the timetables included in Appendix 1 to create the table in Appendix 6, which shows which sessions were planned to run, which of those actually ran, and the unprogrammed sessions that ran by each day of The Pilot Life Rooms operation; also included are the number of participants in each session broken out by the partner organisation that led on the session delivery. The data in Appendix 6 has been combined with The Life Rooms data in Sheets 2, 3 and 4 to create summary tables listing, by day of The Pilot Life Rooms operation, general footfall, Pathways Advice contacts, numbers of contacts (participants) for sessions (showing both The Life Rooms and Everyman & Playhouse data), general enquiries, new registrations, ticket enquiries and number of sessions planned and run. These data have been aggregated by month and over the whole evaluation period and are presented in the findings section below.

### **Qualitative data**

All qualitative data were subjected to thematic analyses. On reading through the qualitative responses to the Online Survey, it was clear that similar themes were represented in the responses across all of the questions. Because of this, the responses were analysed together. The analysis process is as follows:

- SP read through all qualitative responses included in the Online Survey;
- Each response was read carefully and split into segments if it contained multiple observations.
- Each segment was assigned codes to reflect its content (e.g. Building is accessible, improved self-worth, Different visions). A segment may have one code or multiple codes assigned.
- Segments were grouped by their codes; copies were made if more than one code was assigned.
- These codes were then read through and collected into larger groups (themes) that reflected common ideas expressed within them (e.g. City centre location, physical environment, sense of community). Each segment, code and group were then read through carefully, moving smaller groups or recoding individual responses, where this was relevant.
- These final groups were cross-checked with the original source material to ensure that all responses had been coded and used.
- SP then read through the themes and subthemes and restructured them, combining some groups and moving some subthemes, to make a logical flow in the data.
- The final themes and subthemes are listed in Appendix 8(a).

The analysis of the Online Survey responses identified a theme for client reflections, vicariously reported by the participants in the survey. The contents of this theme were very similar to the client feedback supplied by Mersey Care. Consequently, these two have been combined and analysed together to give an insight into how the Members / session participants experienced The Pilot Life Rooms. The themes emerging from this analysis of the combined sources are in Appendix 8(b).

Participants in the Online Survey are identified by their responder number (i.e. the order in which they completed the Online Survey) in the format "Rnn". We had expanded this code to include the organisation the participant worked for and how long they had worked or volunteered at The Life Rooms. This, however, would have made it possible to identify the respondents, so these elements of the codes are not included in the report.

The volunteer case study provided by Everyman & Playhouse is reported through extracts to ensure that the respondent cannot be identified from the text.

## Findings

### Timetabled sessions

It should be noted that some of the University of Liverpool facilitated sessions were missing from the E&P workbook and were added by SP. It is not known if any other data are missing. Consequently, the figures for sessions and participant numbers should be understood to be indicative of engagement with and participation in sessions at The Pilot Life Rooms. Where there are differences in the data gathered by The Life Rooms and Everyman & Playhouse, both sets of figures are included.

#### *Creative and wellbeing sessions (Learning) at The Pilot Life Rooms*

The Pilot Life Rooms offered standard Life Rooms LO sessions, typical of existing The Life Rooms Venues, led by Life Rooms staff and volunteers (LR-WB sessions), combined with creative sessions for wellbeing led by Everyman & Playhouse and The University of Liverpool staff (E&P sessions) and The Life Rooms staff and volunteers (LR-C sessions).

Each month, The Life Rooms and Everyman & Playhouse published a programme of activities (see Appendix 1). The E&P workbook listed each session that they recorded had run and this enabled a comparison between the courses and services that had been planned for each month and the courses and services that were actually delivered (see Appendix 6). These data are summarised in Table 01 below. The sessions that ran during the pilot are listed in Table 02 on the next page.

**Table 01: Planned vs Actual learning sessions at The Pilot Life Rooms**

(Source: Timetables and Life Rooms data (planned); Everyman & Playhouse data (actual))

Month	The Pilot Life Rooms Learning Sessions					
	Planned (Timetables + LR data)			Actual (E&P data)		
	LR- WB	LR- C	E&P	LR-WB	LR- C	E&P
January	22	3	16	5	3	20
February	19	6	38	6	5	33
March	14	6	18	6	8	18
Column totals	55	15	72	17	16	71
LR totals	70			33		
LR + E&P totals	142			104		

It can be seen that planned sessions were evenly distributed between delivery by The Life Rooms staff and Everyman & Playhouse / University of Liverpool staff. Each proposing to deliver approximately 70 sessions over the two and half months' operation of The Pilot Life Rooms. Although 55 Life Rooms LO sessions were planned only 17 were delivered. This is partly explained by session provision on Open Days, when Mersey Care Life Rooms staff and volunteers concentrated their efforts in engaging with the public to talk about The Life Rooms rather than delivering sessions.



**Table 02: Sessions run at The Pilot Life Rooms, 13/01/20 – 10/03/20**  
(Source: Everyman & Playhouse data)

Activity	Notes on activity	Jan	Feb	Mar	All
<b>LR - Wellbeing sessions</b>					
"Action on Addiction" - Living with addictions	For the "Action on Addiction" group	1			1
Army Veterans Taster	Discussion about life as a veteran	1			1
Treasure your wellbeing	Promoting wellbeing	1			1
Wellbeing - other	Promoting wellbeing	1			1
Confidence and assertiveness	Promoting wellbeing		1		1
Trees of Life	Promoting wellbeing		1		1
Managing anxiety	Promoting wellbeing			1	1
Mental health awareness	Promoting wellbeing			1	1
Understanding sleep	Promoting wellbeing			1	1
Understanding anxiety	Promoting wellbeing		1	1	2
Understanding depression	Promoting wellbeing		1	1	2
Living with addictions	Promoting wellbeing	1	2	1	4
<b>LR - Creative sessions</b>					
"Action on Addiction" – Stand-up Comedy	For the "Action on Addiction" group	1			1
Stand-up comedy	Taster sessions		2		2
Mindful Stretching	Mindfulness through body work			2	2
Stand-up comedy for beginners	Course of 5			2	2
Beginners Ukulele	Ukulele skills for wellbeing	1	2	2	5
Music Appreciation	Listening to and discussing music	1	1	2	4
<b>E&amp;P - Creative sessions</b>					
"Action on Addiction" – Drama	For the "Action on Addiction" group	1			1
Introduction to creative writing (UoL)	Open Day taster	1			1
My Time Drama	Open Day taster	1			1
My Time story	Open Day taster	1			1
Conversation Café	Chance to meet and chat with people	2			2
ESOL / Refugee taster	Support session for Refugees	2			2
Drama taster sessions	Introduction to drama skills	5			5
Storytelling techniques taster sessions	Storytelling performance skills	5			5
My Time song and story	Open Day taster		1		1
Stories drop in (UoL)	Tell your own stories - all day		1		1
Life Writing	Wellbeing writing session		2		2
ESOL / Refugee - drama taster	Drama session			1	1
Liverpool Carers - drama taster	Drama session			1	1
Get your groove on!	Dancing for wellbeing			2	2
Confidence through drama	Drama techniques		4	2	6
Confidence through storytelling	Performance skills - course of 8		4	2	6
Confidence through theatre performance	Skills leading to performance - course of 8		4	2	6
Singing for wellbeing drop in	Singing for wellbeing		4	2	6
Writing for wellbeing (UoL)	Creative writing skills		4	2	6
Story Spinning (UoL)	Story development exercises	1	4	2	7
Story time drop in	Listening to stories	1	5	2	8
<b>Totals</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>104</b>

### *Social Prescribing at The Pilot Life Rooms*

A social prescription is a support plan that is co-produced between a Pathways advisor and The Life Rooms member. It most commonly involves signposting individuals to support in their community as well as within The Life Rooms service.

The data below show the number of people that signed up for the Social Prescribing (Pathways Advice) service at The Pilot Life Rooms. There are three sources for these data: The Mersey Care Report, The Life Rooms data from E&P Workbook and Everyman & Playhouse data from E&P Workbook (see Data Collection above). It can be seen from Table 03 that these data, whilst similar, do not always agree.

**Table 03: Number of registrations with the social prescribing service at The Pilot Life Rooms**  
(Source: Mersey Care Report, E&P workbook)

	January 2020	February 2020	March 2020
<b>Mersey Care Report</b>	14	14	7
<b>The Life Rooms data</b>	11	10	7
<b>Everyman &amp; Playhouse data</b>	6	10	2

Pathways Advisors signpost individuals to services and activities that may help them address their concerns and fulfil their goals. Each signpost is a social prescription. Table 04, below, shows how many social prescriptions were recorded during the operation of The Pilot Life Rooms.

**Table 04: Social Prescriptions at The Pilot Life Rooms**  
(Source: Mersey Care Report)

	January 2020	February 2020	March 2020
Employment	5	1	0
Volunteering	5	2	0
External (Signpost into Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise services to support with a range of social and practical issues including finance, housing, benefits)	23	7	20
Learning at The Pilot Life Rooms	3	5	0

### **Number of contacts (participants)**

Mersey Care Life Room staff and volunteers positioned in the foyer of The Playhouse Theatre collected information on general footfall into the theatre, general enquiries, the number of new The Life Rooms member registrations and data from learning session registration forms. Everyman & Playhouse staff collected information on the number of box office enquiries at the theatre. These data were collated into Sheets 2, 3 and 4 of the E&P workbook. At a debrief session held each evening of The Pilot Life Rooms operation, Everyman & Playhouse staff collected information on which courses ran, who led them and how many people attended those courses. These data were collated in Sheet 1 of the E&P workbook.

Daily data from Everyman & Playhouse on contacts for learning (wellbeing and creative) sessions and Pathways Advice are included in Appendix 6. Appendix 7 summarises these data and data on contacts, footfall, enquiries and new member registrations from The Life Rooms data in the E&P workbook for each day and month of the operation of The Pilot Life Rooms.

**Table 05: Number of contacts (participants), new LR members, general footfall and enquiries and ticket enquiries at The Pilot Life Rooms**  
(Source: multiple)

Month of operation	Footfall <sup>iii</sup>	Learning Session Contacts									General enquiries <sup>ii</sup>	New members		E&P ticket enquiries <sup>ii</sup>	Comments
		Pathways Advice			MC Report <sup>i</sup>	Life Rooms data <sup>ii</sup>		E&P data <sup>iii</sup>				MC Report <sup>i</sup>	LR data <sup>ii</sup>		
		MC Report <sup>i</sup>	LR data <sup>ii</sup>	E&P data <sup>iii</sup>		LR	E&P	LR – WB*	LR - C	E&P					
January	719	14	11	6	108	111	152	42	38	204	445	53	53	219	Launch month
February	568	14	10	10	94	94	193	24	35	224	271	41	41	232	Full operation
March	-	7	7	2	-	73	96	28	45	132	179	43	50	161	Data up to 10th
<b>Column totals</b>	1287	35	28	18	-	278	441	94	118	560	895	137	144	612	
<b>LR totals</b>									212						
<b>LR + E&amp;P totals</b>							719			772					
<i>i. Mersey Care Report</i> <i>ii. E&amp;P workbook – Life Rooms data - spreadsheets (2, 3 and 4)</i> <i>iii. E&amp;P workbook – E&amp;P data - spreadsheet (1)</i>									* N.B. E&P data included 99 informal conversations between MC-LR staff and members of the public on 07/01/20 and 42 informal conversations between MC-LR staff and members of the public on 13/01/20. These contacts have been excluded from the session contacts as these individuals did not take part in timetabled activities.						

Table 05 (above) gives the monthly and overall totals for general footfall, Pathways contacts, session contacts, general enquiries, new registrations with The Life Rooms and ticket sales for Everyman & Playhouse. It reports the data from both The Life Rooms and Everyman & Playhouse, and the Mersey Care Report. It can be seen that these data often differ. Rather than trying to reconcile the totals from these sources, we present them all for comparison.

One of the reasons why the data from Mersey Care and Everyman & Playhouse differs will be because Mersey Care record only the number of The Life Rooms members that take part in learning sessions. Everyman & Playhouse recorded all participants. Sometimes, these included groups that did not register as Life Rooms members, core partner members of staff sitting in on sessions, and members of staff from organisations considering referring people to The Pilot Life Rooms. Data is also incomplete for March. Although each session facilitator was to return the session registration sheet and any feedback forms to The Life Rooms coordinator, there were times when Everyman & Playhouse and University of Liverpool staff did not do this as they were learning these processes and procedures. This will also have had an impact on how many contacts were recorded.

These data show that in January and February 1287 people entered The Pilot Life Rooms. Over the two and half months of operation, there were 895 general enquiries and 612 Playhouse ticket enquiries at the box office. Everyman & Playhouse trialled opening the box office while The Pilot Life Rooms was running to see if this had a favourable impact on ticket sales.

There were between 137 and 144 new The Life Rooms membership registrations. There were between 18 and 35 Pathways Advice contacts, with 71 social prescriptions (Mersey Care Report, above). There were between 719 and 772 contacts with learning sessions; these were weighted towards creative wellbeing sessions (678 vs 94 LR-WB session, from E&P data) delivered by both The Life Rooms staff, Everyman & Playhouse staff, University of Liverpool staff and independent session facilitators (e.g. singing for wellbeing facilitators and Storytime storytellers). Although there were five times as many creative wellbeing sessions than Life Rooms LO wellbeing sessions, the number of contacts for creative wellbeing sessions is seven times higher than for Life Rooms LO wellbeing sessions.

## Client feedback

### *Experiences of Learning at The Pilot Life Rooms (Mersey Care Report)*

The Life Rooms used a Life Rooms LO (formerly “Recovery College”) evaluation form for service users to give feedback on sessions of courses that took place at The Pilot Life Rooms. The questionnaire asks six questions exploring the experiences of participants on the course (see Appendix 4).

Sixty-one people completed Mersey Care Life Rooms LO feedback sheets during January and February 2020. The questions and responses are summarised below in Table 06.

**Table 06: Number of responses to Life Rooms LO feedback sheets**

(Source: Mersey Care Report)

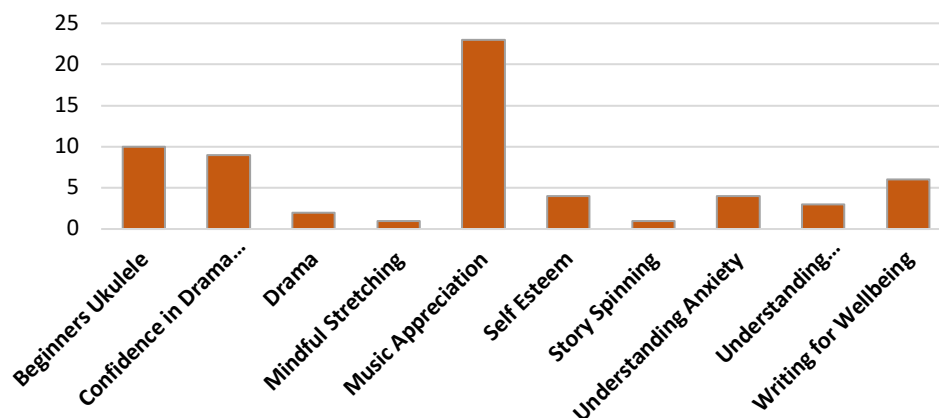
Questions	Number of Responses	Percentage Agree
Did the course cover what you need?	61	100%; Comments - 7
Was the learning environment suitable for the course?	61	100%; Comments - 9
Did the tutor facilitate the course to your expectations?	61	100%; Comments - 10
Did you discuss further opportunities within the group?	58	Yes - 93%; No - 7%; Comments - 5
Did you feel valued in our session?	61	100%; Comments - 4

It can be seen that the people who completed the feedback sheets unanimously felt that the course(s) they had attended had met their expectations and that they had felt valued in the sessions. The comments attached to each question indicate that the sessions were uplifting and enjoyable, the environment was suitable although sometimes there was noise from other parts of the theatre, the tutors were excellent and facilitated the sessions well, there was some discussion about other courses in the groups, and participants felt valued in the sessions with one commenting that “I felt as though I had been a part of the group forever” on their first visit.

### Qualitative and survey responses

Our opportunities to gather client feedback on The Pilot Life Rooms was limited as we did not have ethical approval to speak with clients / Members directly. Of the 61 people who completed feedback sheets, 29 wrote comments in the general feedback question (Question 6 – see Appendix 4). The 61 respondents had attended 10 courses between them (see Figure 01), although it is not known which courses the 29 respondents to Question 6 had attended.

**Figure 01: Courses attended by respondents to Life Rooms LO feedback sheets**  
(Source: Mersey Care)



Analysis of the Online Survey qualitative data identified a number of instances of observed or reported client feedback. This information was shared by staff, volunteers and group leaders attending The Pilot Life Rooms. Further analysis of these data revealed a consistency between these comments and the general comments from the Life Rooms LO feedback sheets. Consequently, the analyses were combined and are reported together here to give an indication of client experiences of The Pilot Life Rooms.

Many of the people who completed the feedback sheets commented that the sessions they attended had been “excellent”, “great”, “wonderful”, “fab” and so forth. The courses they attended had been “fun”, “enjoyable” and were “feel good” sessions.

*This course is doing me the world of good. The group members are great and the tutors run the group in fun and related way. I'd recommend this group to anyone and the tutor too.* (Life Rooms LO feedback sheet)

*Very relaxing therapeutic feel good session reinforcing how music can write and perform always learn something.* (Life Rooms LO feedback sheet)

Engaging with the sessions, and the encouragement of the session leaders, has helped participants to step outside of their comfort zone in a fun and energising way. This has led to increased confidence and improved feelings of self-worth.

*this session is really good for building confidence and is a real feel good session since doing this I have become more aware of peoples perceived status. (Life Rooms LO feedback sheet)*

*I have been astounded by the positive affect it has been having on me and the service users in the groups, the impact of such positivity, encouragement, empowerment and friendship is not to be ignored, I have a number of examples where the improvement to people's confidence, self esteem and mental health has been plain to see and also I have spoken to a number of the service users and they feedback about how much they are loving the sessions and are surprising themselves with how they have enjoyed coming out of their comfort zone and just having fun. (Online Survey - R12)*

In addition, through these sessions, participants have enjoyed listening to other people's stories and so have become more aware of the experiences of others. With the added benefit of some realising that they are not on their own.

*Interesting listening to other peoples stories. (Life Rooms LO feedback sheet)*

*Great to hear different peoples journeys and their music. (Life Rooms LO feedback sheet)*

*Understanding anxiety (symptoms causes controlling it) Is very important cause was informative inviting people to voice their experiences gave some people who had life experiences realise they are not on their own. (Life Rooms LO feedback sheet)*

A number of the sessions were part of courses where the same group met over a number of weeks with a particular task to hand, producing a play, for example. The courses allowed relationships to develop within the group.

*Session was very technical, we read through and rehearsal - I really enjoyed it - it focussed on peoples minds and its continuing to make the team more cohesive. Good relationships forming. (Life Rooms LO feedback sheet)*

*Loved the course group works well together very calming enjoyed the time spent looking forward to next week. (Life Rooms LO feedback sheet)*

Everyman & Playhouse worked with established groups already. Some of these groups came to The Pilot Life Rooms and took part in the sessions on offer. This enabled staff and different groups to meet each other and to learn from each other.

*I have met many interesting people and community organisations that I did not know existed. In particular I really enjoyed the inter-generational group who had a fabulous support system in place. (Online Survey - R8)*

Although the sessions had been fun and engaging, the participants took their involvement seriously and supported each other in their endeavours.

*I was struck by the seriousness with which many of the participants took to the sessions. Not just in terms of effort, but in terms of sustained (and often quite heartfelt) engagement, the supportive nature of the groups in terms of encouraging each other, and the community feel. (Online Survey - R15)*

One person gave feedback on the amount of space available for the course they attended, wishing for a quieter space to work with their partner.

*Just the planning a scene would be great if we could use the bar area to be able to hear our partner properly. However its just a fun course to be on thanks. (Life Rooms LO feedback sheet)*

A number of those who completed the feedback sheets said that they would definitely be back.

*I had never been to Liferooms before but will come again.* (Life Rooms LO feedback sheet)

## The Liverpool Playhouse Life Rooms Staff and Volunteer Survey

### Who took part?

Fifteen people responded to The Liverpool Playhouse Life Rooms Staff and Volunteer Survey (Online Survey) (Table 07). Of these, 10 worked for one of the core partners (Mersey Care, Everyman & Playhouse, and The University of Liverpool), four were volunteers at The Pilot Life Rooms and one was an independent activity facilitator.

**Table 07: Description of respondents to the Online Survey**  
(Source: Online Survey)

Role at The Pilot Life Rooms	Worked or volunteered at other The Life Rooms?		How long have you worked or volunteered for The Life Rooms?			
	Yes	No	1 - 6 months	7-12 months	1 - 2 years	more than 2 years
Staff of Core Partner	7	0	1	2	1	3
	0	3	3	0	0	0
Volunteer	4	0	1	0	1	2
Independent Facilitator	0	1	1	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	11	4	6	2	2	5

Of the 15 respondents to the Online Survey, 11 had worked or volunteered at other Life Rooms in addition to working at The Pilot Life Rooms, and seven had done so for one year or more. This means that the findings from the Online Survey will have a bias towards those already familiar with how The Life Rooms operate. This is by no means a negative as these respondents are able to talk about how this application of The Life Rooms compares with existing practice in other sites. It does mean that there is less information on how staff from Everyman & Playhouse and The University of Liverpool have experienced The Pilot Life Rooms, however. And we are limited in our ability to draw conclusions about how this pilot has affected or complemented the normal operation of The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre.

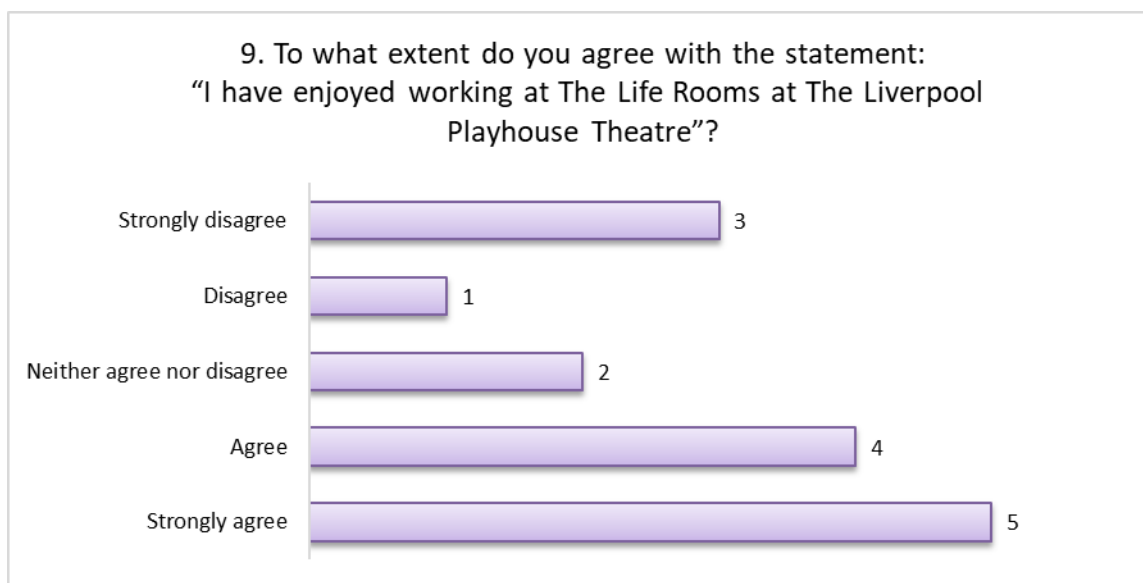
### What did staff and volunteers enjoy about The Pilot Life Rooms?

Nine out of the 15 respondents to the survey agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I have enjoyed working at The Life Rooms at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre (see Figure 02, below). Four people disagreed with this statement.

From Table 08 (below), we can see that there is no marked difference in likelihood in agreement or disagreement with the statement “I have enjoyed working at The Life Rooms at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre” by whether or not the respondent had any prior involvement with The Life Rooms or by the length of time that they had worked or volunteered there, if they had.



**Figure 02: Working at The Pilot Life Rooms has been enjoyable**  
(Source: Online Survey)



**Table 08: Responses to Online Survey Q.9 by prior and length of service at any The Life Rooms**  
(Source: Online Survey)

Online Survey q9: To what extent do you agree with the statement "I have enjoyed working at The Life Rooms at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre"?

	Worked or volunteered at other The Life Rooms venues?							
	No		Yes					Total
Time at any The Life Rooms	1-6M	%	1-6M	7-12M	1-2Y	2Y+		
Strongly agree / agree	3	75%	1	1	1	3	6	55%
Neither agree nor disagree		0%				2	2	18%
Disagree / strongly disagree	1	25%	1	1	1		3	27%
Total	4		2	2	2	5	11	

Analysis of the written responses to the survey questions revealed a number of aspects of The Pilot Life Rooms that participants had valued and enjoyed. These were the city-centre location, the use of an iconic building and the creative wellbeing learning sessions.

The City Centre Location of The Pilot Life Rooms was seen as a benefit, with a number of respondents saying this was "great" or "excellent" and enjoyable.

*The city centre location and the unique environment made for a really positive setting to engage in health and wellbeing activities. (Online Survey - R7)*

One benefit of the city-centre location was that it was accessible by many people and close to public transport hubs. The Pilot Life Rooms made the city centre itself, and other activities within it, more accessible as it gave people a reason to come into the city in the first place.

*I was struck by the Everyman and Playhouse seeing their Life Room offering as a gateway to other (arts etc) activities within the city and, on the face of it, the city centre location seems a key advantage both for this reason and for its accessibility via public transport. (Online Survey - R11)*

*I think this was an excellent feature for bringing people in and I heard lots of remarks about it being good to have a reason to visit the city centre. (Online Survey - R15)*

In particular, this city-centre Life Rooms was seen to be catering to groups that might otherwise feel excluded, and so to bring in new clients to The Life Rooms.

*A city centre location allows for engagement with certain communities, that does not happen as readily elsewhere ... homeless, students, sex workers. (Online Survey - R7)*

*Outstanding, allowing some people who maybe for many years have had only a few locations that they feel supported in. The knock on effect also has been the group have then shopped together in town (win - win). (Online Survey - R14)*

Some, however, questioned whether or not The Pilot Life Rooms was attracting the people who lived close by.

*The demographic coming in were not reflective of the area - most people living in the area are working, caring or in education. We were not open at appropriate times for them. (Online Survey - R5)*

The siting of The Pilot Life Rooms in an iconic building was seen as a benefit, with The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre described as a beautiful, non-clinical, interesting, welcoming, inspiring and creative building. In particular, delivering wellbeing sessions in a creative space highlighted the links between creativity and mental health in an understated and positive way.

*Many of the service users I spoke to commented on how they enjoyed aspects of it: the view from the upper floors, the light, the cafe as a kind of hub, the amount of space, how much fun they had in the 'hidden' downstairs area (the stalls area), their own memories of the Playhouse and how they liked having an excuse to come into the city centre. (Online Survey - R15)*

*The concept of Community, Arts and mental health expanded engagement is a fabulous idea ... by engaging in an iconic building, it seems to put the mental health secondary, (this is a really good thing) as its just Liverpool people from all over the city meeting in a special place maybe for the first time having a great time connecting... (Online Survey - R14)*

A few commented that the décor of the building could do with updating, however.

*I think Playhouse decor is somewhat dated and does not feel fresh like the Life Rooms locations which is always something our service users remark upon. (Online Survey - R5)*

Respondents enjoyed the creative wellbeing learning offer at The Pilot Life Rooms. It was seen as complementing the traditional The Life Rooms offer to support mental health. Participants felt that the creative process empowers people, helping to build self-esteem and self-worth, and nurturing spirit and wellbeing. An additional strength to this is that activities generally occur in groups, aiding a sense of connection.

*It is important to allow participants to express themselves and the creative process empowers everyone and values all ideas and contributions and therefore it builds and supports increasing self esteem and self worth. Sessions that are supporting the participants back into society and daily routines are essential but the creative workshops nurture one's spirit and well being. (Online Survey - R8)*

*[...] these additional services gave our clients opportunities that they would not have previously had or experienced. Combining Cultural Arts with Holistic practices with health & well-being delivery, has expanded our groups engagement choices in continuing care and their recovery. (Online Survey - R14)*

Engaging people through creative activities encouraged participation in other sessions, increasing their stay at The Pilot Life Rooms. For some people and groups, The Pilot Life Rooms enabled access to creative activities (e.g. drama) that they would otherwise have struggled to access elsewhere.

*It was striking how people might come for one of the creative sessions and then stay to try their hand at another one, increasing the amount of time they spent in the Life Rooms. I thought it was a positive thing that some service users took the opportunity [to try a] variety of activities and then attend what they felt like across different weeks (ie being regularly present in the space but dipping in and out of particular group activities). (Online Survey - R15)*

*Partnerships of The Play House have had access to drama groups they would not otherwise been able to access as readily. (Online Survey - R3)*

Delivering creative wellbeing learning sessions at The Pilot Life Rooms has itself been a catalyst to further engagement with delivering creative wellbeing workshops.

*From a University of Liverpool point of view, this has proved immensely creative (I'm thinking of the creative writing for wellbeing online programme). (Online Survey - R11)*

**What did staff and volunteers find challenging about delivering The Pilot Life Rooms?**

Although the majority of respondents had enjoyed working at The Pilot Life Rooms, there were, nevertheless, a number of challenges in doing so. Eight of the 15 respondents to the Online Survey agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I have found it challenging to work at The Life Rooms at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre” (see Figure 03). Four people disagreed with this statement.

**Figure 03: Working at The Pilot Life Rooms has been challenging**  
(Source: Online Survey)

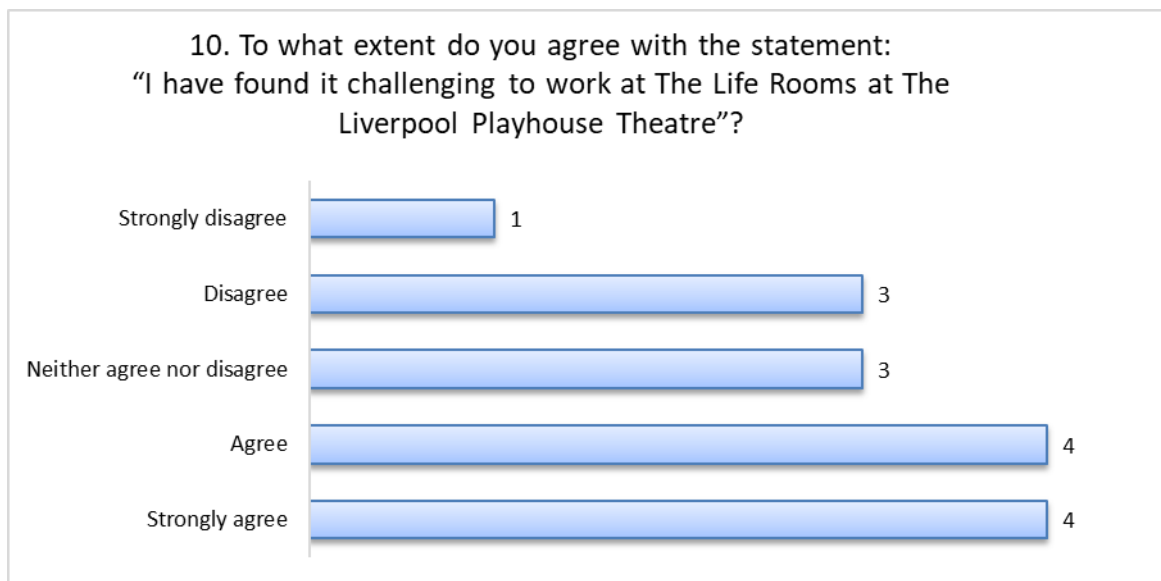


Table 09 (below) indicates that there were marked differences in the degree to which staff and volunteers found it challenging to work at The Pilot Life Rooms. Respondents who had worked or volunteered at another The Life Rooms venue prior to The Pilot Life Rooms were much more likely to have found working at the pilot venue challenging. In particular, six of the seven people with one or more years’ experience at other venues found this to be so, and all of those with more than two years’ experience did so.

**Table 09: Responses to Online Survey Q.10 by prior and length of service at any The Life Rooms**  
(Source: Online Survey)

10. To what extent do you agree with the statement: “I have found it challenging to work at The Life Rooms at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre”?

	Worked or volunteered at other The Life Rooms venues?							
	No		Yes					
Time at any The Life Rooms	1-6M	%	1-6M	7-12M	1-2Y	2Y+	Total	%
Strongly agree / agree	1	25%	1		1	5	7	64%
Neither agree nor disagree	1	25%		1	1		2	18%
Disagree / strongly disagree	2	50%	1	1			2	18%
Total	4		2	2	2	5	11	

From the written responses to this question and other questions in the Online Survey, these challenges included the suitability of the physical space of the theatre to The Life Rooms delivery, the loss of visibility of the standard Life Rooms offer, and challenges in collaboration across three very different organisations.

The physical environment of the theatre presented some technical, logistical and safeguarding issues. The WiFi didn't work well and this was needed for some members of staff to do their work. The layout of the building created some issues for staff and service user safety as many of the spaces were open and connected by open plan stairways. In January, the building was also very cold. The main bar area where the café was, in particular, was difficult to heat.

*The work environment was a major challenge; it was freezing cold, the technical issue of wifi not working efficiently at all (which I need to do my job).* (Online Survey - R3)

*Another significant challenge was the layout of the building itself as this has given logistical and further safeguarding issues.* (Online Survey - R2)

The open aspect of many of the spaces also meant that conversations were not confidential and noise from one session might impact on the delivery of another. Some of this was resolved by timetabling and the opening of other spaces such as the Producer's office and the stalls bar.

*There were challenges related to the space too -- for example sound clash between different sessions running at the same time. But these were quickly worked out through timetabling and space allocation -- though it is something to be aware of going forward.* (Online Survey - R15)

*The environment did not feel fitting for the work, many of the spaces were not confidential and meetings and groups could be heard across multiple areas.* (Online Survey - R1)

A number of respondents felt, therefore, that the space was not appropriate for the delivery of The Life Rooms offer. It was suggested that The Life Rooms could be contained on one floor of the building. This may be an area where The Pilot Life Rooms could learn from other Life Rooms sites.

*The set out in which Liferooms is based. It should at least be on one floor/level of the building.* (Online Survey - R10)

A number of respondents felt that creative wellbeing learning sessions at The Pilot Life Rooms detracted from the standard, holistic Life Rooms Learning Offer. Respondents acknowledged the value of these sessions but raised concerns that people who wanted more practical advice and mental health support might be overlooked or might not feel comfortable attending The Pilot Life Rooms.

*Accessing some target populations for example the homeless in city centre. I would have expected we would provide a lot more support to this group however uptake has been slow. It may be because of the way a theatre/creative provision is viewed with a lack of understanding about other aspects of the service. For example a creative provision in a theatre may be viewed by vulnerable groups as 'not essential' with potential differences in background/experiences/class etc. (Online Survey - R4)*

*I have no problem with the creative focus of the partnership, however I feel that the strong focus sometimes drew attention away from some of the practical issues people may have been struggling with. I one hundred percent advocate for the arts to support mental health recovery, however, I'm not sure the partnership got the mix quite right. (Online Survey - R2)*

Some felt that The Life Rooms mental health learning sessions were not a priority. Fewer of them were offered, as we have seen above, and they were not as well attended as the creative wellbeing sessions.

*I feel that due to this The Life Rooms brand was lost. The creative focus was excellent, however it overshadowed the other aspects of what The Life Rooms courses have to offer. This was not fully addressed and at times it felt that the mental health courses were considered lesser than the creative courses, potentially being pushed aside. (Online Survey - R1)*

*I think it's just that, LARGELY focused on the creative arts side, which is a wonderful offering (changed lives and provided great fun) but it dominated and took focus of an all round biopsychosocial model that the LR's offers. LR's offer support with well-being (creative/fun), mental/physical classes and support, social prescribing; I feel this was lost amongst the excitement of the creative offering. (Online Survey - R3)*

Respondents commented on the clash of cultures between The Life Rooms and Everyman & Playhouse. Each organisation has its own operational requirements and these were a challenge to negotiate at these early stages of The Pilot Life Rooms.

As an NHS organisation, The Life Rooms has strict governance arrangements to ensure safeguarding and to correctly register Members and their activity in The Life Rooms. Staff from core partners not familiar with these procedures and processes did not always implement them as effectively as The Life Rooms staff would have liked, which had an impact on the attendance data collected. Conversely, there was also a steep learning curve for these members of staff to understand the aims and standard procedures of The Life Rooms.

*[...] did not follow our procedures and the communication of running times or capacity or sign ups, became a major issue and skewed our statistic (stats show how successful or not it was and it looked like a failure due to not following procedures). (Online Survey - R3)*

*The main challenge I found was in establishing correct safeguarding procedures across the two teams (Life Rooms and Playhouse). Sometimes I felt things may have been lost in translation between an NHS and community organisation (although I do not think any of this was intentional from either side). (Online Survey - R2)*

*The different strategies/ethos employed by the delivery agencies. For effective collaboration we needed very quickly to understand the rationale and approach of life rooms. This was essential if we were to engage with the participants effectively. (Online Survey - R8)*

Reflecting the concerns already discussed about the loss of visibility of The Life Rooms mental wellbeing learning courses, some respondents found negotiating the different approaches of the two organisations daunting (creative wellbeing vs holistic wellbeing). In addition, The Life Rooms operates a philosophy of person-centred care, with individuals encouraged to take control of their wellbeing through, in part, the choices of which sessions they sign up to. Some of The Life Rooms staff felt that the Everyman & Playhouse approach of signing up whole groups for courses went against their person-centred approach. Equally, it has

been challenging for staff from the other core partner organisations to work with a client group that is unfamiliar to them.

*Entire groups being signed up for something - we encourage that to be the choice of the individual as part of person-centred care and the element of control. (Online Survey - R5)*

*[...] while we have worked and supported many community groups Life Rooms is open to individuals with many diverse and complex needs. Becoming familiar with these needs and preparation for practical sessions has proved challenging but highly rewarding. (Online Survey - R8)*

These differences in knowledge and understanding of client groups has seemed to lead to different priorities and goals in the core partner organisations. In addition, from a research perspective, a lack of understanding of University research procedures and requirements has led to different aspirations for what the evaluation could include and when data collection could take place.

*A difference in understanding of client groups, target populations and health and wellbeing contributes to different priorities at times. (Online Survey - R4)*

*This often felt like less of a collaboration and more two organisations clashing while attempting to work towards a similar goal. However, the goal (while theoretically the same) did not always feel like it looked the same to both organisations. (Online Survey - R1)*

*It has been difficult to negotiate at times what is and is not possible to research (especially within a relatively short-term project) given the ethical requirements around carrying out research with vulnerable adults and the different protocols which can apply for health service evaluation and research and the timescales required to get ethical approval for research with vulnerable people (either from the NHS or the University). (Online Survey - R11)*

Respondents identified a number of challenges relating to the way that The Pilot Life Rooms operated.

Volunteers at The Pilot Life Rooms were not always happy with their roles and struggled to find their identity in its operation.

*Volunteers often expressed that they struggled to find their identity within Life Rooms and mentioned they had been referred to as 'bodies' for safeguarding reasons, expressing that bringing people up and downstairs and sitting in the cold of the doorway was not what they had in mind. (Online Survey- R5)*

*[...] volunteers are not being used at what we are best at and that's being around people coming in and having conversations. Not just at the front desk giving ultimatums sign up or you can't come in. (Online Survey - R6)*

The delivery of the The Pilot Life Rooms often felt disorganised, with classes running over, rushing to open the doors in the morning and last minute arrangements made with session facilitators.

*The courses were not always timed well, with some over running by a lot, impacting courses afterwards. The Pathways offer was not utilized well. (Online Survey - R1)*

*It always felt rushed in the morning and we would often still be setting up when the doors open. (Online Survey - R5)*

*The organisation is frustrating. As a practitioner I have often only had a week advanced warning at the most. At the beginning I had 24 hours notice, it seemed quite poorly organised. But, I think that may have been due to issues with funding, so I'm sure it would improve if there were long term plans and the ability to plan ahead. (Online Survey - R9)*

Finally, communication between and within the core partner organisations was also a challenge. It has been difficult to arrange meetings between the partner organisations, and there have been issues communicating key information between the organisations. One respondent observed that there had been difficulties in

communication within The Life Rooms and that had impacted on their ability to effectively communicate with Everyman & Playhouse.

*[...] it has been difficult to conduct face-to-face meetings even without the intervention of COVID-19, which has presented its own technological issues around successful communication. Finding mutually convenient times to meet was always going to be a challenge and has proved so throughout. (Online Survey - R11)*

*Communicating around different priorities, aspirations and realities of providing a health and wellbeing service to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. (Online Survey - R4)*

*Not being kept in the loop with information (timetables etc) and lack of organisation. (Online Survey - R13)*

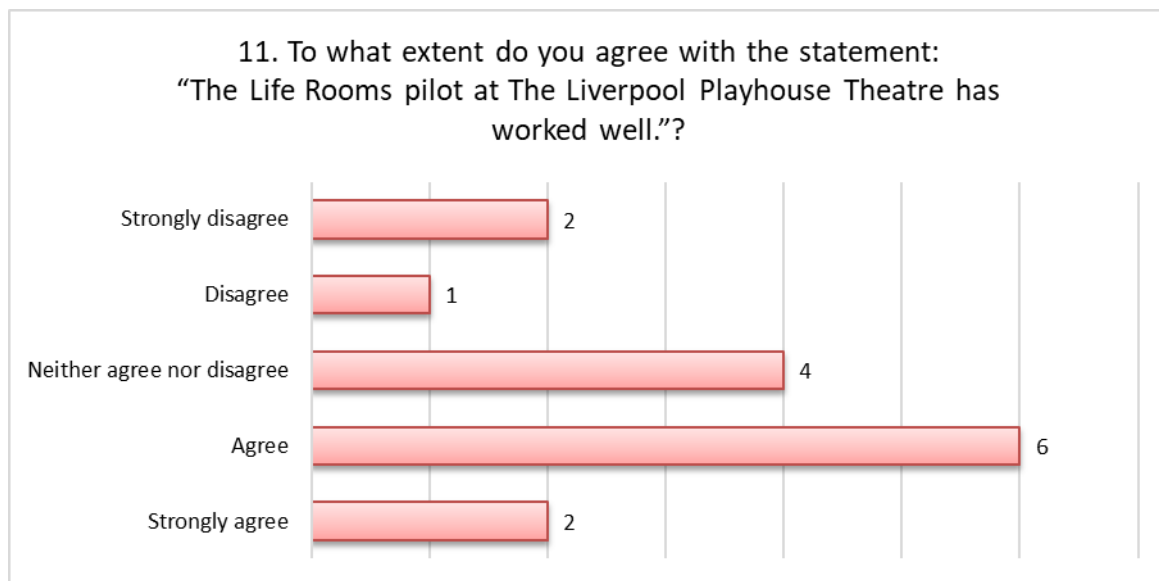
*Communication between Life Rooms staff internally hasn't always been the best and this has impacted our performance. This has then negatively affected communication with the Playhouse team. (Online Survey - R2)*

#### *What did staff and volunteers feel worked well in delivering The Pilot Life Rooms?*

Eight of the 15 respondents to the Online Survey agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “The Life Rooms pilot at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre has worked well” (see Figure 04). Three people disagreed with this statement.

**Figure 04: The Pilot Life Rooms has worked well**

(Source: Online Survey, q. 11)



Whilst all of those respondents who were new to The Life Rooms felt the pilot worked well, opinions were mixed across those who had prior experience of The Life Rooms (Table 10, below). Three of the five respondents who had more than two years’ experience of The Life Rooms strongly agreed or agreed with the statement “The Life Rooms pilot at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre has worked well”, which is encouraging given that all of these people had found it challenging to work at The Pilot Life Rooms.



**Table 10: Responses to Online Survey Q.11 by prior and length of service at any The Life Rooms**  
(Source: Online Survey)

11. To what extent do you agree with the statement “The Life Rooms pilot at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre has worked well.”?

	Worked or volunteered at other The Life Rooms venues?							
	No		Yes					
Time at any The Life Rooms	1-6M	%	1-6M	7-12M	1-2Y	2Y+	Total	%
Strongly agree / agree	4	100%		1		3	4	36%
Neither agree nor disagree		0%			2	2	4	36%
Disagree / strongly disagree		0%	2	1			3	27%
Total	4		2	2	2	5	11	

Written responses to the Online Survey indicate that the elements of The Pilot Life Rooms that had worked well included the enthusiasm for the project from the core partners, the evolving partnership and the sense of community developing through the activities.

A number of the respondents said that the passion and enthusiasm of The Life Rooms staff and Everyman & Playhouse staff for bringing The Life Rooms to the city-centre in The Playhouse Theatre was integral in making The Pilot Life Rooms work. The enthusiasm of Everyman & Playhouse staff particularly impressed Life Rooms staff and volunteers: using their connections to bring new members into The Life Rooms, their creativity in publicising the service and making the Life Rooms staff and volunteers feel very welcome. In particular, the enthusiasm and organisational skills of Rebecca Ross-Williams were praised.

*However, the enthusiasm of both parties was integral in making this work and being able to provide something worthwhile and different. (Online Survey - R7)*

*The enthusiasm of the Playhouse staff and trying to attract new attention was impressive and I found them innovative (penguin suits) and good at publicising (radio/press). (Online Survey - R3)*

*... but I will add that all the staff at the playhouse and Everyman and the Life Rooms all want this to work and this is evident in the enthusiasm and the hard work, patience and caring way that they have delivered the service and wanting to expand it as they see the positive impact it has on people. I would like to mention Rebecca Ross-Williams who has taken this by the horns and has been so determined to make it work and is still evolving and improving the service. (Online Survey - R12)*

The collaboration between the core partner organisations has been “eye opening” for all, identifying ways in which The Life Rooms offer could be expanded in the future and allowing the non-Mersey Care partners to understand the ethos and operation of The Life Rooms.

*The blending of two different organisations has been eye opening and offered some idea of further things that can be brought into The Life Rooms in future. (Online Survey - R1)*

*I have found this partnership a very valuable insight into how the Life Rooms operate, the populations they serve, how the service is evaluated and most especially the ethos of the Life Rooms. I don't believe I would have understood any of this in the same kind of 'inward' way had it not been for my involvement in speaking directly with the Mersey Care and Everyman & Playhouse team about setting up a new Life Rooms offer at the Playhouse. (Online Survey - R11)*

Whilst clearly with some teething troubles, the partnership between Mersey Care, Everyman & Playhouse and University of Liverpool was seen as a strength in the delivery of The Pilot Life Rooms, with the skills of the different organisations complementing each other and providing a blueprint for similar collaborations in the future.

*I feel the partnerships worked in synergy of strengths, knowledge and understanding of participants and their ongoing needs. (Online Survey - R14)*

*... this has laid the foundation for a future fruitful partnership between English and the School of the Arts at the University of Liverpool as well as providing an exemplary model for other endeavours of this kind, in Liverpool and elsewhere. (Online Survey - R11)*

A number of respondents observed the sense of community that had developed at The Pilot Life Rooms, and the positive effect that this has had. Respondents had enjoyed the opportunity to co-create a unique, community-based service and the opportunity to meet interesting people from diverse backgrounds.

*I love the fact that our Theatre is participating and collaborating in this way. It is and should be part and parcel of our commitment to and connection with our Communities. (Online Survey - R8)*

*The sense of community. The bright atmosphere and air of creativity. It did feel like a typical creative workshop day... which is great... the purpose of supporting mental health and wellbeing wasn't paraded around. Feeling positive and supported is a by-product of creative group sessions. (Online Survey - R9)*

They also enjoyed the fact that everyone was welcome and that the sense of community that developed was reflected in the way that participants in learning sessions supported and encouraged each other.

*... as some of groups who suffer with mental health, feel labelled by their community support setting, this project, blew that perception out of the water. (Online Survey - R14)*

*I love the sense of community. My favourite aspect of the Life Rooms work is that there are no pigeon holes; everyone is welcome. We're not categorising people with labels of poor mental health, but the opposite - encouraging all people to look after their mental health. (Online Survey - R9)*

Ultimately, many respondents found their experiences at The Pilot Life Rooms rewarding, despite the challenges in its operation.

*I have wholeheartedly loved working with the Playhouse and hope to return to that in the future. (Online Survey - R5)*

Respondents have enjoyed seeing new faces at The Life Rooms (even if they don't always come back) and being part of developing a new service that fills a gap in The Life Rooms provision.

*Seeing new faces and signing them up for courses. (Online Survey - R10)*

*I feel there was a gap in the provision of the Life Rooms service and actually delivering a service in a real life working iconic building and environment as the Playhouse theatre make it feel so special. (Online Survey - R12)*

### *Recommendations from respondents to the Online Survey*

Respondents made a number of recommendations for how The Life Rooms at The Playhouse Theatre could be taken forward in the physical space of the theatre.

#### 1. Promotion / marketing

Some respondents commented on the difficulties in obtaining Members and that many of the Members were already known to the core partners. There is a large footfall outside The Playhouse Theatre, and respondents wondered if more could be done to engage with them. Perhaps making the entrance less intimidating and having signs outside the door.

*Get more people through the door... of all different backgrounds and demographics. More advertising, and a bigger sign outside the building. There was nothing visible outside the building to make it look like anything was going on inside. And there is a LOT of footfall outside! (Online Survey - R9)*

Respondents suggested advertising more widely, to promote the service throughout the city, including more community events to raise the profile of the service.

*Marketing. I feel like no one I spoke to outside of the sessions had heard of what was happening. Considering that the demographic is EVERYONE, I would have thought there would be a massive campaign across Liverpool to let people know about the sessions at the Playhouse. As I understood it, the majority of people who came to participate in a session were already known by Life Rooms or the Playhouse, so the net definitely needs to be spread wider as it's such a great offering!* (Online Survey - R9)

## 2. Session planning / development

Respondents felt that the programme on offer at The Life Rooms at The Playhouse Theatre would evolve as the core partners were able to see what works and what does not. This might benefit from exploring different ways of testing this, including input from staff and volunteers on the ground. Part of this would be to consider how to strengthen the Life Rooms LO wellbeing offer alongside the creative wellbeing offer from Everyman & Playhouse. Respondents felt that doing this would lead to a model of working that could be rolled out across the country.

*We could build more of a program of works and it's like any new venture, you learn as you go along what works and what doesn't and I am confident that the ongoing result will be a robust model of working that could be used across the country.* (Online Survey - R12)

*It would be interesting to explore more mechanisms for how the form and content creative/arts-based session could be made to be responsive to the users interests and needs to bring more people in and enrich engagement.* (Online Survey - R15)

## 3. Strengthen working relationships

Respondents suggested ways in which the core partnership could be strengthened. At their heart, these recommendations raise the possibility of the core partners spending more time together to discuss ideas, build working relationships, establish boundaries and agree effective communication protocols. Each partner has its own strengths. The Life Rooms staff have a lot of experience from working across other The Life Rooms sites and can offer expertise in recovery and promoting mental health. Everyman & Playhouse can offer their expertise in creative wellbeing and arts-based sessions. Finding mutually convenient times to meet has been a struggle, so perhaps creating a calendar of meetings might be useful.

*Perhaps a calendar/schedule of team meetings at the outset might have helped but this would always have needed to be flexible, however firm.* (Online Survey - R11)

*[...] as the other Life Rooms sites have been providing the service for a lot longer and now are working in partnership with LR at the Playhouse/Everyman, that it is imperative that there is ongoing meetings, consulting and monitoring and for the Playhouse/Everyman to take advice from the Life Rooms management who are specialising in the recovery and ongoing mental health management of the service users, and the tools that they have evolved and used to date. Equally I think that the Everyman & Playhouse could help the other life room sites with the delivery and ideas from a creative point of view also.* (Online Survey - R12)

## 4. Improvements to the use of the space

Part of these discussions should be how to use the space at The Playhouse Theatre more effectively. Respondents suggested a permanent office for The Life Rooms at the theatre, a community space or kitchen/café where people can “just be” and meet other people, and more confidential spaces for difficult conversations.

*I believe Life Rooms needs a permanent office with secure lockable filing cabinets.* (Online Survey - R5)

*A kitchen/Cafe area where you can stay and share a meal meet other people and groups. (Online Survey - R14)*

*More confidential spaces to support difficult conversations taking place. (Online Survey - R2)*

#### 5. Reconsider registration at the door

One respondent suggested removing the requirement to register at the door as this might prove to be difficult for people struggling with their mental health.

*No registration required to enter the building or go upstairs, it's not right. Considering we are a mental health device, it's spikes anxiety and panic. Then we can go from there. (Online Survey - R6)*

#### 6. Champions

Another respondent suggested creating session champions/volunteers who could move to become session leaders.

*Create session champions/volunteers to then become leaders. (Online Survey - R14)*

#### *COVID-19 lockdown*

Reflecting on the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown and the difficulties this has caused for The Pilot Life Rooms, respondents observed that the lockdown had also created opportunities for creativity in moving some learning sessions online and for strengthening the core partnership. Respondents observed that relationships with Members have continued to form through the online sessions. Something is lost, however, by not sharing the same physical space so, if the online provision is to continue when the theatre is open once more, it would be useful to look at how the online and face-to-face sessions could complement each other. Online provision could also be used to help identify areas where The Life Rooms provision could be adapted to suit the needs of the community.

*Although the situation created by COVID-19 has presented great challenges [...] it has clearly presented great opportunities for creative and imaginative ideas for alternative online provision and, even because of the challenges, for a strengthened partnership between the three organisations. (Online Survey - R11)*

*We are seeing the same regular faces on the zoom sessions and it's really lovely to build up a rapport even though we're just on a screen! (Online Survey - R9)*

*If a substantial amount of delivery of services might be online in the wake of COVID-19 then the partners need to come together to think about specific tweaks to the sessions they provide and how we can match up asynchronous and live content so that we don't lose the best features of the live space. Making videos for the YouTube platform has been a qualified success but a dimension of interactivity is lost and the ability to track people's engagement or follow their needs and interests is curtailed. This will be a process of continued adaptation. (Online Survey - R15)*

Finally, a number of respondents were saddened that The Pilot Life Rooms in the theatre had to pause and look forward to the service resuming and expanding.

*I hope the provision of Life Rooms is maintained and expanded and it could well be viable to recruit other cultural organisations to collaborate and participate. (Online Survey - R8)*

*It is a shame that we had to prematurely pause the partnership as I feel that things were starting to go in the right direction and that challenges had simply been teething problems. (Online Survey - R2)*

*I feel for me that the importance of this new service in the Playhouse should be funded and encouraged and then sit back and watch it soar. (Online Survey - R12)*

## Volunteer and staff testimonies

Included here are testimonies from a member of staff and a volunteer at The Pilot Life Rooms. Between them they raise a number of the issues reported above, and reflect on their experiences of being part of The Life Rooms generally and the pilot in particular. They highlight the positive potential of The Life Rooms at this city-centre location.

### *Staff Testimony (Source: Mersey Care Report)*

One of The Life Rooms Senior Learning facilitators said the following about their experience at The Pilot Life Rooms:

*The Life Rooms / Playhouse offer launched in the New Year, 2020. Along side our partner provision, The Life Rooms [Learning Offer] delivered sessions as part of our joint offer. These sessions consisted of mental and physical health related courses, and other wellbeing and creative activities. The location in central Liverpool was fabulous, and allowed us a presence in the heart of the city and access to the central community. From a Facilitator's point of view, the venue was an exciting and sometimes challenging space to operate from. The upper level studio was a fabulous space particularly for our creative and active sessions. We utilised several areas within the venue, although it was challenging to deliver some of our more reflective or discussion based courses due to lack of enclosed space, and the open plan nature of the building. Most recently we started to use the Producer's Office for some sessions. Facilitators, and other staff, could sometimes feel a little isolated in the venue which required careful management. The combined activity of both partners, and the utilisation of the central café area for creative and social activities, meant that the building often had a good 'buzz' about it, and the sense of this being a Life Rooms space was becoming more established.*

### *Volunteer Case Study (Source: Everyman & Playhouse)*

Here we reproduce elements of a longer case study statement by a volunteer with The Life Rooms who has been encouraged to develop skills as a session facilitator for The Pilot Life Rooms. This has been edited to remove statements and information to protect this individual's anonymity.

*I have struggled with mental health for most of my life and unfortunately on two occasions it has resulted in an attempt on my own life and a period of hospitalisation. [...] I was referred to Life Rooms after a stay in an acute adult mental health facility. My psychologist there felt that the service would benefit me as I started my recovery. I was anxious and uncertain as to whether this was the path I should go down, but trusted in their advice and I'm so grateful and thankful that I made that initial call to Walton Life Rooms.*

*I needed help and from walking into the building, they were helpful, caring and very supportive and it was evident that the staff were dedicated to making a difference in peoples' lives. It was difficult for me to accept support, and that's exactly what they did by guidance, listening and discussing the types of sessions that would possibly help me. The positivity and encouragement and lovely people had reaffirmed my faith in humanity and that people care.*

*I started attending Walton Life Rooms as a service user [...] and was an active contributor to the sessions and this was recognised by the staff. I found that [my former job] meant that I could relate to other service users and pass on my advice and coping strategies. I got to a point in my recovery that I felt strong enough to make the next step and was encouraged and recommended by the staff to the Managers of Life Rooms. I assisted in a number of sessions in the [Life Rooms LO] at Walton and had good feedback and realised that this was a way I could give back to Life Rooms and carry on with making a difference in peoples' lives.*

*In late 2019 a new Life Rooms in the city centre at the Playhouse was initiated and I was really enthusiastic about being part of a new exciting venture because I feel that when people are struggling in life for whatever reason creativity i.e. drama expression, arts encourages people to step out of their comfort zones and has positive impact on self-esteem, confidence and overall well-being. This has lived*

*out in my experience of volunteering for Life Rooms at the Playhouse as the iconic building exudes a lack of stigma, positivity, creativity and aspiration. I knew from the start that I had made the right decision. The staff at the Playhouse were so enthusiastic and excited about this new venture and the commitment coupled with the expertise of the staff from the Theatre resulted in a vibrant, trusting, encouraging and welcoming environment where people, like myself, could feel that they could have an exciting time exploring their often deep seated confidence issues.*

*I was involved from the start in the [session] activities, initially to make up the numbers, but officially there as a volunteer. I found that I excelled in the [session exercises] and tapped into something I wanted to do for years but unfortunately due to my mental health issues had not had the confidence to pursue. [The session facilitators] encouraged me and gave me the confidence to shine. This made such an impact on my own life and my friends and family commented on the change in my confidence levels and overall wellbeing. I watched and learned from [the session facilitators] on how to express myself and to believe in myself. This then gave me the confidence to help steer the sessions, encourage people in the sessions and to take a more facilitator role which I loved and enjoyed, but most of all I witnessed the difference that it had not only made to my life but to the other service users.*

## Discussion

The Pilot Life Rooms ran for a very short period of time. The first month comprised taster sessions and Open Days in order to promote the service. In the following seven weeks there was a more formal schedule of activities reflecting the more usual offer of The Life Rooms in other venues. What differed in this location was the number of creative wellbeing sessions developed and delivered by all the partners, but primarily by Everyman & Playhouse.

Because of the short duration of the pilot and the lack of first-hand accounts from Members and Everyman & Playhouse staff, we are limited in how much we can conclude from this evaluation. Nevertheless, there were some clear findings. These are discussed below using the evaluation aims as headings.

### How many people used The Pilot Life Rooms?

In January and February 2020, 1287 people visited The Pilot Life Rooms. Over the whole pilot period, there were 895 general enquiries, 612 box office enquiries and up to 144 new The Life Rooms members. The learning offer comprised creative wellbeing sessions developed and delivered by all partners, and The Life Rooms LO wellbeing sessions delivered by The Life Rooms staff. 142 sessions were planned but only 104 were delivered. Creative wellbeing sessions were generally delivered as planned; it was The Life Rooms Learning Offer that did not deliver as many sessions with only 17 sessions out of 55 running. Some of this was because The Life Rooms staff did not run sessions on Open Days, but rather discussed The Life Rooms with members of the public who came through the doors. There were proportionally fewer people attending The Life Rooms LO sessions (mean 5.5 people per session) than the creative wellbeing sessions (mean 7.8 people per session), however. This may reflect the nature of the sessions themselves but may also reflect the fact that Everyman & Playhouse invited established groups along to The Pilot Life Rooms, most of whom took part in a creative wellbeing session. The Life Rooms staff expressed concern that their Learning Offer sessions were lost in the shadow of the creative wellbeing sessions, and The Life Rooms brand along with that. They were also concerned that people who may have been interested in engaging with mental wellbeing sessions would not have felt comfortable to do so in an environment that seemed to promote creative activities more.

Mersey Care reported 35 engagements with social prescribing during the pilot; these resulted in 71 referrals to services, such as employment, volunteering, external service providers and learning at The Pilot Life Rooms.

### **What were the participants experiences of The Pilot Life Rooms provision?**

We did not have ethical approval to interview members of The Pilot Life Rooms. Our understanding of their experiences comes from responses to the session feedback questionnaire and vicarious reports of their experiences by volunteers and staff. Both sources, though, indicate that members enjoyed the sessions they attended a great deal. They found the sessions uplifting and were challenged to come out of their comfort zones. Members felt valued in the sessions and considered the tutors to be excellent. They noted some noise transference from other sessions but otherwise found the environment to be suitable. Members reported increased levels of confidence and self-worth. They developed a connection with others, especially those attending a course of sessions with the same participants each week. This led to the development of relationships and mutual support. They found listening to others' stories both instructive and valuable.

### **What were the experiences of staff and volunteers?**

Staff and volunteers were able to express their thoughts on the pilot through an online survey. Fifteen people took part, with a mix of people with existing experience of The Life Rooms and people who were new to The Life Rooms. Most were Life Rooms volunteers or staff. There were few respondents from Everyman & Playhouse and University of Liverpool. It would have been interesting to have a bigger input from the theatre staff. We were unable to organise planned focus groups with a wider base, which might have given us a better understanding of how The Life Rooms was perceived by Everyman & Playhouse. That said, it was good to have input from people familiar with The Life Rooms and the way they work in other settings.

Most (60%) respondents enjoyed their experience of The Pilot Life Rooms, and this was reflected across all levels of experience of The Life Rooms. Respondents felt that the city centre location was a benefit, drawing in new clients and increasing participants' access to the city centre itself. Setting the service in an iconic building, The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre, was also a strength with Members enjoying activities in a building that they had strong memories of. The creative wellbeing sessions were seen as complementary to the standard Life Rooms Learning Offer, leading to empowerment and connection among members. Delivering these sessions also led to greater opportunities for University of Liverpool staff to develop online courses, expanding their skill sets too.

Just over half (53%) of respondents had found working at The Pilot Life Rooms challenging. This was much more likely among people with one or more years' experience at The Life Rooms generally. As discussed before, these respondents felt that The Life Rooms Learning Offer had been lost in the excitement about the Everyman & Playhouse creative wellbeing sessions. There had been some logistical issues to do with inaccessible WiFi, the temperature of the building, which was very cold at times, difficulties in safeguarding volunteers, staff and visitors in such a fluid and open space, noise transference and lack of confidential spaces. The volunteers were disappointed with some of the tasks they were assigned to and there were issues with timekeeping – the morning set up was a rush and some of the learning sessions ran over time. Communication needed to be improved, both within and between the partners and when booking external facilitators.

Just over half (53%) of respondents to the survey felt The Pilot Life Rooms had worked well. Again, this was reflected across all levels of experience of The Life Rooms, including some people who had also found working at The Pilot Life Rooms challenging. The passion and enthusiasm for the pilot from all volunteers and staff, but especially from Everyman & Playhouse staff, was seen as a key element for why the pilot had worked well. The creativity of Everyman & Playhouse staff in building connections and publicising the Life Rooms was valued. Particularly, the success of volunteers and staff in creating a space that welcomed everyone and where participants felt supported and supported each other was said to have created a sense of community.

### **What has been the experience of running a Life Rooms in partnership with an arts institution?**

The partnership between Mersey Care, Everyman & Playhouse and University of Liverpool was seen as both a strength and a limitation of the pilot. As an NHS organisation, Mersey Care has governance arrangements and procedures aimed at safeguarding and gathering attendance data to monitor the service. These policies and procedures were new to the other partners and they did not always follow them as Mersey Care would have wished. Monitoring data is important to justify the continuation of the service and so there was some concern amongst Mersey Care staff that these were not being adhered to. Another challenge for Mersey Care staff was the way in which Everyman & Playhouse staff invited some of their existing groups to take part in The Pilot Life Rooms sessions. The Life Rooms is a person-centred service, aimed at supporting individuals to develop a way forward in their lives. This holistic approach seemed to have been lost with the inclusion of established groups in the activities. Conversely, Everyman & Playhouse and University of Liverpool staff found it challenging to work with the client group that attends The Life Rooms. They needed support to understand the way that The Life Rooms operates and how best to engage with their members. The core partners appeared to have different priorities and goals for The Pilot Life Rooms. The Everyman & Playhouse aims, recorded above, would seem to be more ambitious than those of Mersey Care and may have led to a different emphasis in the operation of The Pilot Life Rooms, but we have no evidence to support this. Each organisation, however, is seeking evidence to support the continuation of a service that they consider to be valuable.

The collaboration between Mersey Care and Everyman & Playhouse was “eye opening”. A successful collaboration could provide a blueprint for expanding The Life Rooms into other types of venues with different partners. It could also provide an exemplar model for the ways in which creative venues can work to support their local communities. These possibilities were exciting to the volunteers and staff who took part in the pilot. The skills that each organisation brought to the partnership were identified as a strength of the ways in which The Pilot Life Rooms were delivered.

### **How might the provision of The Pilot Life Rooms be strengthened?**

A number of recommendations for how The Pilot Life Rooms could be strengthened have been suggested by the respondents to the Online Survey and others have emerged from the analyses. These are summarised in the next section. At their heart is a desire to strengthen and improve the partnership at the core of The Pilot Life Rooms; to undertake some partnership development work so that each partner understands the procedures and goals of the others and to develop a common set of goals, how to achieve them and a mission statement to hold them together. In addition, there have been suggestions for how to improve the use of the theatre space, the planning of sessions so that The Life Rooms Learning Offer is not lost, and the marketing and promotion of the service.

#### **Core partner aims**

The evaluation findings have been able to speak to most, but not all, of the core partners’ aims for the pilot. Without more input from staff at Everyman & Playhouse, we cannot say if it has been, from their point of view, a viable use of a working theatre as a community space during the daytime. Participants in the pilot have enjoyed their time there, albeit with some recommendations for how the space could be improved to support The Life Rooms better. The collaboration between the core partners is a work in progress. But this is what would be expected in bringing very different organisations together. There is an energy about the partnership that has generated passion and enthusiasm for the project, and people have found it rewarding to work at the theatre. The city centre location has been a success. It has brought people into the city centre that had previously felt excluded from it, and who have then gone on to spend more time there outside of their engagement with The Pilot Life Rooms.



The on-site pilot did not run long enough to assess whether the research-based content of sessions the University of Liverpool ran changed service users' experience or engagement in a manner that was different from a creative-writing offering that was not based on University of Liverpool research. There was more scope for this in the subsequent digital sessions but this did not involve the same cohort of service users as at the Playhouse.

### **The COVID-19 pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic halted the delivery of The Pilot Life Rooms in a physical space, The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre, and volunteers and staff were sad that it had to pause. It did, however, create an opportunity to develop online provision and The Pilot Life Rooms continued to meet with Members online.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

This evaluation has demonstrated the value of running a Life Rooms at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre, an iconic building in the Liverpool City Centre. The time period covered by this evaluation was short, and the first month operated very differently to a standard Life Rooms. Nevertheless, the offer at The Pilot Life Rooms was valued by members, volunteers and staff, and anecdotal and course feedback evidence suggests that Members experienced growths in confidence and feelings of self-worth alongside developing relationships and mutual support with others. Engagement with The Life Rooms also encouraged Members to spend more time in the city centre.

There were challenges too. In particular, the space at the theatre was not always suited to the confidential nature of some of The Life Rooms offer and posed difficulties in safeguarding members, volunteers and staff. The core partners operate in very different worlds with different norms, expectations and procedures relating to their work. There were some difficulties in bringing these worlds together, although the partnership was also seen as a strength of The Pilot Life Rooms, and the passion and enthusiasm of the people involved made the pilot work.

There has been some progress towards The Life Rooms three pillars of social prescribing, learning and community. A sense of community was already developing at The Pilot Life Rooms. Learning was somewhat dominated by creative wellbeing sessions, but these were well received. Social prescribing had been limited.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought the pilot to a premature close at the theatre. Partners did, however, develop online sessions that have continued throughout the theatre's closure. It is hoped that The Life Rooms will resume at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre when it is safe to do so. With this in mind, we offer the following recommendations to the partners to improve the delivery of The Life Rooms in the theatre at that time.

### **Marketing and promotion of the service:**

Explore ways to increase footfall at The Pilot Life Rooms. Suggestions have included improving signage at the entrance to the theatre when The Life Rooms is operating, holding community events, engaging with people living close to the theatre, and additional advertising. In all cases, capitalising on what has worked well at the pilot.

### **Session planning and delivery:**

Plan the sessions and advertising to ensure there is a good balance between the creative offer and The Pilot Life Rooms Learning Offer (particularly the ratio of creative wellbeing sessions compared to mental health/wellbeing sessions) so that The Life Rooms wellbeing sessions and branding do not get lost. One option might be to develop the programme with staff and volunteers and to encourage members and volunteers to become session champions and future session leaders. On a practical level, the sessions need

to run to time so that they do not compromise sessions that follow after them, and independent facilitators should be booked well in advance.

The COVID-19 pandemic created an opportunity to develop online provision for The Pilot Life Rooms. This could be capitalised on to consider how online and face-to-face sessions could be combined when the theatre is open again, and to engage with online members to brainstorm ways to improve the service.

### **Strengthen working relationships between the core partners:**

Collaboration between the core partners was a strength of this pilot period. It takes time, however, for organisations as different as these to develop working relationships that encompass each other's procedures and goals. To aid this, consider some partnership development activities that enable partners to (a) understand each other's governance procedures and to ensure they are followed, (b) understand and support the client group for The Life Rooms, (c) agree goals for The Life Rooms at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre and how these will be achieved, (d) agree a mission statement for the The Pilot Life Rooms, and (e) improve communication within and between the partners. These can be supported by regular training and review.

It may help to have a calendar of partnership meetings planned ahead so that each partner is able to attend.

### **Improvements to the physical space of the theatre and its use as a Life Rooms:**

For The Life Rooms to work well in the theatre space, there need to be confidential spaces for private meetings and workshops that cover personal experiences. The open aspect to the architecture is beautiful but allows sound to carry between the different areas front-of-house. Thought should be given as to how this sound transfer can be minimised, whilst still maintaining the atmosphere in the theatre. Is there space to have kitchen / café / community space in the theatre? It is valuable to have somewhere where members and visitors can mingle and "just be". The Life Rooms staff would welcome a permanent office at the theatre.

Practical issues that need some resolution include reliable WiFi access, temperature control and registration processes.

## **Dissemination**

The main output from the evaluation will be this report drawing together the findings from the different strands of the evaluation.

The report will be shared with relevant members of the partner organisations and evaluation participants, should they wish to receive a copy.

Findings from this evaluation will inform future delivery within The Pilot Life Rooms and the design of a more robust evaluation of future service provision.

## **Responses to the Report from Core Partners**

All core partners have read a final draft of the report. Given that The Pilot Life Rooms has continued online during the COVID-19 pandemic, and with the hope that it will resume at the theatre in the future, the partners wished to record their responses to the report and the next steps their organisations and the partnership will take. They do so here.

### **Mersey Care**

The aim of expanding The Life Rooms model to a city centre location within a well-known cultural landmark was achieved through this pilot. The pilot evidenced the ability for the two organisations to collaborate and

learn from each other. Given more time, this learning process would have continued and been able to offer yet further opportunities for support for the communities we serve. In terms of understanding how the use of a city centre arts location can support the delivery of The Life Rooms model, certainly the report highlights the realities of operationalising this provision in terms of both strengths and challenges. The delivery of Life Rooms learning provision, with the inclusion of a greater focus on creative courses, seems to have been very well received by those using the service. Clearly, there are opportunities to expand engagement with the social prescribing component of The Life Rooms model and this will need to be developed further in future work. Overall, this report offers a comprehensive insight into the experiences of delivering The Life Rooms model in this unique way, and a clear starting point for developing this partnership in the future.

### **Everyman and Playhouse**

- The pilot was shorter than expected but paved the way for the partnership to develop with commitment from both organisations to seek funding to continue development.
- Wifi: The Theatres were successful with Arts Council England Recovery Fund and Garfield Weston Foundation Grants which is enabling a focus on developing the Theatres' digital work including upgrading the Playhouse Wifi to enable streaming which should solve the issues experienced in Life Rooms at the Playhouse.
- Balance between of Everyman & Playhouse Creative Wellbeing Sessions and Life Rooms Learning Offer: this has subsequently been resolved through the life Rooms Learning On-Line programme and agreement that the creative wellbeing focused sessions will not be more than 50% of the programme.
- Unification of the Programme: Since the pilot we sought to address some of the divisions between the Life Rooms offer and the Creative Wellbeing offer; particularly through the digital work. Some activities that are creatively led are now seen as being of wellbeing benefit – e.g. Confidence through Drama. What is needed next is the development of creative methodology and practice to be able to deliver what has traditionally been seen as mental-health focused sessions.
- Strengthen Working Relationships: the initial project in the Playhouse space was only able to run for 3 months, but the relationship developed through partnership on the on-line work leading to Life Rooms Learning On-Line, and the Theatres' Director of Creativity and Social Change working from a Life Room site one day a week. A collaboration in December between Life Rooms and Everyman & Playhouse to take performance to service users doorsteps enabled the targeting of other teams in Mersey Care which strengthened relationships and opened up the potential for targeted engagement of teams working with vulnerable people through Mersey Care.
- Marketing and communications: a joined-up comms strategy with active social media presence would be helpful to the operation and growth of the project. A better strategy was achieved at Christmas 2020 and helped in getting the word out about the services. Increased communication through Mersey Care and its health networks, along with time to develop partnerships across the sector, is important.
- Collaborative practice started to develop at the Playhouse which has developed further through the digital work since. A paper on improvisation and wellbeing was created by practitioners to illustrate a creative practice which is highly effective in delivering on mental health and wellbeing. Most recently we have made a film for the digital platform Confidence through Drama as a practical continuum to the mental health and wellbeing film Developing Confidence and Assertiveness.
- The provision of regular consistent activity at the Playhouse provided an opportunity for individuals from the Theatres' intensive engagement projects, e.g. with sex workers, to continue engagement through independent activity which, for the individuals involved, was effective.

- With such a short period to pilot, the work with the Homelessness teams and Social Inclusion Teams didn't have time to develop, so progress in engaging local demographics of vulnerable people was limited. It was effective for individuals who engaged and the relationship with Action on Addiction and Crisis developed.

The pilot, while short was effective as a first step in:

- establishing the working partnership between Mersey Care and Everyman Playhouse and understanding the strengths of a statutory service and smaller charity working together
- establishing the need for the provision city centre (even before strategic engagement and promotion could take place)
- evidencing creative wellbeing activities impact on mental health and wellbeing (mostly through service user feedback)
- a theatre being an accessible and aspirational space for engagement (even before adaptations)
- community activity taking over the Theatre's physical spaces during the daytime
- getting interest from other partners in terms of a more sustained offer, e.g. Community Integrated Care and Age Exchange, PSS, Adult Services, CCG
- identifying areas for development, e.g. space, internet, marketing etc.
- providing a base for leveraging further resource to develop the initiative.

### **The University of Liverpool**

As the junior partner in this pilot, the University had two main roles and goals: i) evaluating the service delivered at Life Rooms at the Playhouse by the major partners, Mersey Care and Everyman & Playhouse and ii) contributing research-based creative sessions and seeing if this provided benefits to both service users and university staff. The results and recommendations of (i) are this report itself – albeit an evaluation of a severely truncated pilot due to the pandemic. In terms of (ii): it was not possible to meaningfully evaluate either the content of the benefits of the University's research-led creative writing sessions in the time that they took place in the Playhouse.

However, the framework and planning for the sessions at the Playhouse generated online content and classes that, while they fall outside the scope of this evaluation, proved successful, and provided the ground for further collaboration between the partners, both together and separately. They also gave invaluable experience in adapting our outreach and community work to an online audience. The main areas of activity were:

- The English Department creating research-led Writing for Wellbeing videos created for the Life Rooms YouTube channel over the first lockdown.
- Writing for Wellbeing Zoom classes delivered for Everyman & Playhouse (these were separate from the Life Rooms) running from April-October 2020.
- The University contributing regular Writing for Wellbeing classes as part of the new Life Rooms Online from October 2020 onwards.
- Everyman & Playhouse acting as one of the partners on the University's AHRC-funded research project (led out of the English Department) *COVID-19 CARE: Culture and the Arts, from Restriction to Enhancement: Protecting Mental Health in the Liverpool City Region*  
<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/english/research/featured-research/covid-19-care/>.

## Appendix 1 – The Pilot Life Rooms timetables, January – March 2020

<b>The Life Rooms at The Playhouse January 2020 – Planned activities</b>			
<b>Monday 13th January</b>		<b>Tuesday 14th January</b>	
<b>Open Day:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Managing Anxiety 10 am</li> <li>• Drama 11 am</li> <li>• Guided relaxation 12 noon</li> <li>• Conversation Cafe 12 noon</li> <li>• Music appreciation 2 pm</li> <li>• Storytelling 3 pm</li> <li>• Meet the team 3.30 pm</li> <li>• Tree of Life drop in All day</li> </ul>		Introduction to Managing Anxiety	10 am
		Drama	11 am
		Guided Relaxation	12 noon
		Conversation Café	12 noon
		Music appreciation	2 pm
		Storytelling	3 pm
		Meet the team	3:30 pm
		Tree of life drop in	All day
<b>Monday 20th January</b>		<b>Tuesday 21st January</b>	
Mental Health Awareness	10 am	Introduction to Self Esteem	10 am
Drama	11 am	Drama	11 am
Living with addictions	12 pm	Conversation Café	12 noon
Introduction to understanding depression	1 pm	Women’s mental health	1 pm
Story spinning	2 pm	Uke for beginners	2 pm
Storytelling	3 pm	Storytelling	3 pm
Meet the team	3:30 pm	Meet the team	3:30 pm
Weigh to Go drop in	All day	Game social drop in	All day
<b>Monday 27th January</b>		<b>Tuesday 28th January</b>	
Introduction to creative writing	10 am	<b>Open Day</b>	
Drama	11 am		
Introduction to confidence and assertiveness	12 noon		
Living with addictions	12 noon		
Treasure your wellbeing	2 pm		
Storytelling	3 pm		
Meet the team	3:30 pm		
Arts and crafts drop in	All day		
<b>Pathways Advice</b>			
<p>Next step guidance signposting service with a range of partners and community connections available for your support.</p> <p>Pathways Advisors can support with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recovery College</li> <li>• Volunteering</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Debt/Money</li> <li>• Mental Wellbeing</li> <li>• Physical Wellbeing</li> <li>• Family/Caring role</li> <li>• Social groups</li> <li>• Housing</li> </ul>			

Drop in service available Monday and Tuesday every week from 10am to 3:30pm.  
For more information please call us on 0151 478 6556 or email [pathways.advisor@merseycare.nhs.uk](mailto:pathways.advisor@merseycare.nhs.uk)

### The Life Rooms at The Playhouse February 2020 – Planned activities

<b>Monday 3th February</b>		<b>Tuesday 4th February</b>	
Tree of Life	10 am	Understanding Anxiety	10 am
Confidence through drama	10 am	Confidence through theatre performance (1/8)	10 am
Living with addictions drop in	12 noon	Music appreciation	12 noon
Singing for wellbeing drop in	12 noon	Women and mental health	2 pm
Writing for wellbeing	12 noon	Confidence through storytelling (1/8)	2 pm
Understanding depression	2 pm	Story time drop in	4 pm
Story spinning	2 pm	Arts and crafts	All day
Story time drop in	4 pm		
Stories drop in	All day		
<b>Monday 10th February</b>		<b>Tuesday 11th February</b>	
Confidence and assertiveness	10 am	Mental health awareness	10 am
Confidence through drama	10 am	Confidence through theatre performance (2/8)	10 am
Living with addictions drop in	12 noon	Life Writing	10:30 am
Singing for wellbeing drop in	12 noon	Music appreciation	12 noon
Writing for wellbeing	12 noon	Managing anxiety	2 pm
Stand Up Comedy	2 pm	Confidence through storytelling (2/8)	2 pm
Story spinning	2 pm	Story time drop in	4 pm
Story time drop in	4 pm	Arts and crafts	All day
Stories drop in	All day		
<b>Monday 17th February</b>		<b>Tuesday 18th February</b>	
Living life to the full	10 am	Self esteem	10 am
Confidence through drama	10 am	Confidence through theatre performance (3/8)	10 am
Living with addictions drop in	12 noon	Life Writing	10:30 am
Singing for wellbeing drop in	12 noon	Beginners Ukulele	12 noon
Writing for wellbeing	12 noon	Treasure your wellbeing	2 pm
Stand Up Comedy	2 pm	Confidence through storytelling (3/8)	2 pm
Story spinning	2 pm	Story time drop in	4 pm
Story time drop in	4 pm	Arts and crafts	All day
Stories drop in	All day		
<b>Monday 24th February</b>		<b>Tuesday 25th February</b>	
<b>Open Day 10 am – 4 pm</b>		Managing anxiety	10 am
		Confidence through theatre performance (4/8)	10 am
		Life Writing	10:30 am
Confidence through drama	10 am	Beginners Ukulele	12 noon
Singing for wellbeing drop in	12 noon	Mental health awareness	2 pm
Writing for wellbeing	12 noon	Confidence through storytelling (4/8)	2 pm
Story spinning	2 pm	Story time drop in	4 pm
Story time drop in	4 pm	Arts and crafts	All day

## Pathways Advice

Next step guidance signposting service with a range of partners and community connections available for your support.

Pathways Advisors can support with the following:

- Recovery College
- Volunteering
- Employment
- Debt/Money
- Mental Wellbeing
- Physical Wellbeing
- Family/Caring role
- Social groups
- Housing

Drop in service available Monday and Tuesday every week from 10am to 3:30pm.

For more information please call us on 0151 478 6556 or email [pathways.advisor@merseycare.nhs.uk](mailto:pathways.advisor@merseycare.nhs.uk)

<b>The Life Rooms at The Playhouse March 2020 – Planned activities</b>			
<b>Monday 2nd March</b>		<b>Tuesday 3rd March</b>	
Understanding sleep	10 am	Stand Up Comedy for beginners (1/5)	10 am
Confidence through drama	10 am	Confidence through theatre performance (5/8)	10 am
Mindful stretching	10:30 am	Music appreciation	12 noon
Living with addictions drop in	12 noon	Confidence through storytelling (5/8)	2 pm
Singing for wellbeing drop in	12 noon	Understanding depression	2 pm
Writing for wellbeing	12 noon	Story time drop in	4 pm
Get your groove on!	1 pm	Arts and crafts drop in	All day
Story spinning	2 pm		
Understanding anxiety	2 pm		
Armchair exercise	3 pm		
Story time drop in	4 pm		
Stories and Tree of Life drop in	All day		
<b>Monday 9th March</b>		<b>Tuesday 10th March</b>	
Mental health awareness	10 am	Stand Up Comedy for beginners (2/5)	10 am
Confidence through drama	10 am	Confidence through theatre performance (6/8)	10 am
Mindful stretching	10:30 am	Music appreciation	12 noon
Living with addictions drop in	12 noon	Confidence through storytelling (6/8)	2 pm
Singing for wellbeing drop in	12 noon	Living life to the full	2 pm
Writing for wellbeing	12 noon	Story and chat drop in	4 pm
Get your groove on!	1 pm	Arts and crafts drop in	All day
Story spinning	2 pm		
Managing anxiety	2 pm		
Armchair exercise	3 pm		
Story time drop in	4 pm		
Stories and Tree of Life drop in	All day		
<b>Monday 16th March</b>		<b>Tuesday 17th March</b>	
Treasure your wellbeing	10 am	Stand Up Comedy for beginners (3/5)	10 am
Confidence through drama	10 am	Confidence through theatre performance (7/8)	10 am
Mindful stretching	10:30 am	Music appreciation	12 noon
Living with addictions drop in	12 noon	Confidence through storytelling (7/8)	2 pm
Singing for wellbeing drop in	12 noon	Understanding psychosis	2 pm
Writing for wellbeing	12 noon	Story and chat drop in	4 pm
Get your groove on!	1 pm	Arts and crafts drop in	All day
Story spinning	2 pm		
Self esteem	2 pm		
Armchair exercise	3 pm		
Story time drop in	4 pm		
Stories and Tree of Life drop in	All day		
<b>Monday 23rd March</b>		<b>Tuesday 24th March</b>	
Living life to the full	10 am	Stand Up Comedy for beginners (4/5)	10 am
Confidence through drama	10 am	Confidence through theatre performance (8/8)	10 am
Mindful stretching	10:30 am	Confidence through storytelling (8/8)	2 pm
Living with addictions drop in	12 noon	Managing anxiety	2 pm



Singing for wellbeing drop in	12 noon	Story and chat drop in	4 pm
Writing for wellbeing	12 noon	Arts and crafts drop in	All day
Get your groove on!	1 pm		
Story spinning	2 pm		
Confidence and assertiveness	2 pm		
Armchair exercise	3 pm		
Story time drop in	4 pm		
Stories and Tree of Life drop in	All day		
<b>Monday 30th March</b>		<b>Tuesday 31st March</b>	
<b>Open Day 10 am – 4 pm</b>		Stand Up Comedy for beginners (5/5)	10 am
		Life Writing	10:30 am
		Music appreciation	12 noon
Confidence through drama	10 am	Confidence through storytelling	2 pm
Mindful stretching	10:30 am	Women and mental health	2 pm
Singing for wellbeing drop in	12 noon	Confidence through theatre performance	3 pm
Writing for wellbeing	12 noon	Story time drop in	4 pm
Get your groove on!	1 pm	Arts and crafts	All day
Story spinning	2 pm	Confidence through theatre	All day
Armchair exercise	3 pm		
Story time drop in	4 pm		
Stories and Tree of Life drop in	All day		
<b>Pathways Advice</b>			
<p>Next step guidance signposting service with a range of partners and community connections available for your support.</p> <p>Pathways Advisors can support with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recovery College</li> <li>• Volunteering</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Debt/Money</li> <li>• Mental Wellbeing</li> <li>• Physical Wellbeing</li> <li>• Family/Caring role</li> <li>• Social groups</li> <li>• Housing</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">Drop in service available Monday and Tuesday every week from 10am to 3:30pm.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">For more information please call us on 0151 478 6556 or email <a href="mailto:pathways.advisor@merseycare.nhs.uk">pathways.advisor@merseycare.nhs.uk</a></p>			

## Appendix 2 – Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust Information Governance approvals

**From:** Yell Linda  
**Sent:** 28 February 2020 08:52  
**To:** Rotheram Clare  
**Subject:** RE: The Life Rooms at The Playhouse - evaluation

If this is fully anonymised data you do not need a sharing agreement.

Regards  
Linda

---

**From:** Rotheram Clare  
**Sent:** 27 February 2020 16:14  
**To:** Yell Linda  
**Subject:** RE: The Life Rooms at The Playhouse - evaluation

Hi Linda,

Just to clarify, would we need some sort of data sharing agreement in order to share the below data, or is it ok for me to do without?

Thanks,

Clare

---

**From:** Yell Linda  
**Sent:** 13 January 2020 14:33  
**To:** Rotheram Clare  
**Cc:** Kelly Gina  
**Subject:** RE: The Life Rooms at The Playhouse - evaluation

Hi Clare,

I don't have an issue with you sharing the anonymised data with the Lpool University however, if this is going to be published anywhere they would need to contact the Trust beforehand.

Regards

Linda

## Appendix 3 – Data collection – Life Rooms LO Attendance Register



Mersey Care  
NHS Foundation Trust

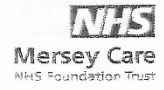
Community and Mental Health Services

### Recovery College Attendance Register

Office use only:

<b>Session:</b>		<b>Course cancelled?</b>	Yes/No If yes, why?
<b>Trainer:</b>		<b>Submitted by:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>		<b>Received by:</b>	
<b>Time:</b>		<b>(if external)</b>	
<b>Day:</b>	Mon/Tue/Wed/Thu/Fri		

	Name IN ALL CAPITALS	Please sign in
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Community and Mental Health Services

## Recovery College Attendance Register

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35		

For use of session facilitator

Please log any issues that you wish to be included in the report below:



## Appendix 4 – Data collection – The Life Rooms session feedback sheet



**Mersey Care**  
NHS Foundation Trust

Community and Mental Health Services

Course Title.....	Course Venue.....
Tutor/Tutors.....	Date.....
Student name.....	(Optional)

1) Did the course cover what you need?

Yes  No  Prefer not to say

Tell us what you would add or remove?

2) Was the learning environment suitable for the course?

Yes  No  Prefer not to say

If no, please tell us why?

3) Did the tutor facilitate the course to your expectations?

Yes  No  Prefer not to say

4) Did you discuss further opportunities within the group?

Yes  No

If no, please tell us why?

5) Did you feel valued in our session?

Yes  No

If no, please tell us why?



6) Recovery College is Co-designed, co-produced and Co-delivered. We massively value your feedback and suggestions to help continually improve our service. Please let us know if there's anything further you would like to tell us about your experience today.

Online evaluation form

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/V5P2XDX>



## Appendix 5 – Data collection – The Online Survey

# The Liverpool Playhouse Life Rooms Staff and Volunteer Survey

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## Introduction

### Study Title: Evaluation of a Life Rooms pilot at the Liverpool Playhouse Theatre

*You are being invited to participate in the preliminary evaluation of The Life Rooms pilot at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important for you to understand why the evaluation is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to ask us if you would like more information or if there is anything that you do not understand. Please also feel free to discuss this with your colleagues, if you wish. We would like to stress that you do not have to accept this invitation and should only agree to take part if you want to.*

**You have been invited to take part in this survey because you are:**

- **A member of staff of one of the core partners of The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre Life Rooms: Mersey Care, Everyman & Playhouse, The University of Liverpool; or**
- **A volunteer for The Life Rooms who has worked at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre Life Rooms; or**
- **An independent provider of a workshop or activity.**

**Your responses to this survey will be anonymous - we will not ask you to provide any information that will allow us to identify who you are.**

**You may skip any question that you do not want to answer.**

**First, we will give you some background information to the survey and why we would like you to fill it out. Then, we will ask you to complete a couple of consent questions so that we know we can use the answers you give in our evaluation.**

**Thank you.**

**What is the purpose of the study?**

The University of Liverpool's Department of English have been commissioned by Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse and Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust to evaluate the first seven weeks' operation of a pilot Life Rooms in The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre - *the period of time when The Life Rooms operated in the physical space of the theatre prior to the coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown.*

The Life Rooms are a free NHS service for people ready to take the next steps in their lives. They offer support finding services, a recovery college, creative courses for wellbeing and a café.

Prior to the coronavirus lockdown, The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre was underused during the daytime. This pilot was testing to see whether or not space within the theatre could be used to

support and promote health and wellbeing among local communities when it is not being used for performances.

The evaluation will draw together routine monitoring information collected during the operation of The Life Rooms at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre, feedback on the operation of The Life Rooms from staff and volunteers gathered through an online survey, and a focus group discussion with leads from the core partners to discuss the effectiveness of the partnership.

During the coronavirus lockdown, The Life Rooms at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre are offering online support through YouTube and Zoom. This provision will be evaluated separately. ***This evaluation is concerned only with the operation of The Life Rooms in the physical space of The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre.*** Although, there will be the opportunity to comment on the current provision if you wish.

### **Do I have to take part?**

You do not have to take part. But please note that, if you do choose to take part, it will not be possible for us to remove your contribution as the survey responses will be anonymised at source.

### **How will my data be used?**

Your answers to this survey will be combined with the answers from everyone else who completes it.

The answers to any questions with multiple choice answers will be analysed using descriptive statistics, for example with frequency charts showing the percentage of respondents who chose each option in the answer. The answers to any questions with free text will be analysed using qualitative thematic analysis, that is we will pool all the answers and look for themes among them - places where people agree or disagree.

These analyses will be included in an evaluation report that we will send to the core partners of The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre Life Rooms: Mersey Care, Everyman & Playhouse and The University of Liverpool.

The data from this survey will be saved on a secure, password protected drive (M:\ drive) on the University of Liverpool central computer. They will be kept for 10 years in line with GDPR recommendations.

Learning from this preliminary evaluation will inform how The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre Life Rooms will operate, once it is able to start meeting face-to-face once more.

### **Expenses and / or payments**

Unfortunately, we cannot offer any payment for taking part.

### **Are there any risks in taking part?**

There are no anticipated risks to you by taking part in the evaluation.

### **Are there any benefits in taking part?**

The evaluation will identify where the pilot is working well and where there are opportunities to improve the delivery of The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre Life Rooms. It is hoped that this will improve the service and this may have a positive impact on your role at or experience of The Life Rooms pilot at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre.

### **Who can I contact if I have further questions?**



If you have a question, please contact Dr Sam Solnick on [sns@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:sns@liverpool.ac.uk).

## Please give your consent for us to use your responses to this survey in our study:

1. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to decline to answer any particular question or questions. *Required*

Yes /No

2. I understand that it will not be possible for my responses to be withdrawn from the study once I have completed the survey as the research team will not know which survey submission belongs to me.

Yes /No

3. I understand that the survey responses will be held securely and in line with data protection requirements at The University of Liverpool.

Yes / No

4. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my fully anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research. *Required*

Yes / No

5. I agree to take part in the above study. *Required*

Yes / No

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## Reflecting on the operation of The Life Rooms in the physical space of The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre...

6. **What was your role at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre Life Rooms?** *Required*

- I work for core partner of The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre Life Rooms: Mersey Care or Everyman & Playhouse or The University of Liverpool
- I am a volunteer with The Life Rooms at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre
- I am an independent provider of activities and/or workshops at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre Life Rooms

### Q6.a Only if "I work for a Core Partner...":

6.a Before we continue with the main survey, please can you tell us your experiences of the partnership between The Life Rooms, Everyman/Playhouse and the University of Liverpool. We are interested in the development of The Life Rooms offer at The Playhouse as well as the delivery of the service there. For example: what challenges have there been; what do you think has worked well; what do you think could have been done differently? Thank you.

Free Text

**7. Have you worked or volunteered at any other Life Rooms venue? *Required***

Yes / No

**8. How long have you worked or volunteered for The Life Rooms (please include all Life Rooms you have worked or volunteered at)? *Required***

- 1 - 6 months
- 7 - 12 months
- 1 - 2 years
- more than 2 years

**9. To what extent do you agree with the statement “I have enjoyed working at The Life**

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

**9.a What have you enjoyed about working at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre Life Rooms?**

Free text

**9.b What have you not enjoyed?**

Free text

**10. To what extent do you agree with the statement: “I have found it challenging to work at The Life Rooms at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre”?**

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

**10.a What has been challenging about your work at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre Life Rooms?**

Free text

**11. To what extent do you agree with the statement “The Life Rooms pilot at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre has worked well.”?**

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

**11.a What has worked well at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre Life Rooms?**

Free text

**11.b What hasn't gone so well?**

Free text

**12. What are your thoughts about the city centre location of The Life Rooms at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre?**

Free text

**13. What are your thoughts about the largely creative focus of the activities at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre?**

Free text

**14. Has anything surprised you in this Life Rooms venue?**

Free text

**15. How might the face-to-face operation of The Liverpool Playhouse Life Rooms be improved**

Free text

Can we learn from other Life Rooms?

**Q16 Only if “worked or volunteered at any other Life Rooms venue” (Q7):**

**16. What could The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre Life Rooms learn from other Life Rooms venues?**

Is there anything else that might help us?

**17. Is there anything else you would like to say? (You may also use this space to comment on The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre Life Rooms online coronavirus (COVID-19) provision, including any thoughts about how this might work alongside face-to-face provision in the future?)**

Free text

**Thank you!**

**Thank you for taking part in our survey.**

Your answers will help us to understand how The Liverpool Playhouse Life Rooms has worked over the first seven weeks of its operation ... while it operated in the physical space of the theatre before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

**What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?**

If you are unhappy or have a problem with this survey, please feel free to let us know by contacting Dr Sam Solnick on [sns@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:sns@liverpool.ac.uk) and we will try to help. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with then you should contact the Research Ethics and Integrity Office at [ethics@liv.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@liv.ac.uk). When contacting the Research Ethics and Integrity Office, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher(s) involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

**Who can I contact if I have further questions?**

If you have a question, please contact Dr Sam Solnick on [sns@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:sns@liverpool.ac.uk).

## Appendix 6 – Planned vs actual The Pilot Life Rooms sessions

(Source: Monthly timetables, E&P workbook)

Date	Planned sessions (Timetables)	Actual sessions (E&P list)	Notes on activity	Contacts (E&P list)				
				Total	Creative sessions		Wellbeing sessions	Pathways Advice
					E&P / UoL	Life Rooms	Life Rooms	
<b>JANUARY</b>								
<b>13/01/2020</b> <b>(Open Day)</b>	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Drama	Introduction to drama skills	7	7			
	<i>(Delivered - not on timetable)</i>	“Action on Addiction” Taster	Living with addiction wkshop	16			16	
	<i>(Delivered - not on timetable)</i>	ESOL Refugee Taster	Support for Refugees	20	20			
	<i>(Delivered - not on timetable)</i>	My Time story	Storytelling performance skills	13	13			
	Intro to Managing Anxiety	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
	Guided relaxation	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
	Conversation Cafe	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
	Music appreciation	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
	Storytelling	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
	Meet the team	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
Tree of Life drop in All day	<i>(Did not run)</i>							
<b>14/01/2020</b>	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Drama	Introduction to drama skills	6	6			
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Conversation Cafe	Conversing with new people	25	25			
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Music Appreciation	Listening and discussing music	12		12		
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Storytelling	Storytelling performance skills	4	4			
	<i>(Delivered - not on timetable)</i>	Wellbeing other		13			13	
	<i>(Delivered - not on timetable)</i>	My Time Drama	Introduction to Drama	14	14			
	<i>(Delivered - not on timetable)</i>	ESOL Refugee Taster	Support session for Refugees	16	16			
	<i>(Delivered - not on timetable)</i>	Army Veterans Taster	Discussing life as a veteran	10			10	
	Intro to Managing Anxiety	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
	Guided relaxation	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
	Meet the team	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
	Tree of Life drop in All day	<i>(Did not run)</i>						

The Life Rooms at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre: Preliminary evaluation of the pilot, 6 January – 17 March 2020

Date	Planned sessions (Timetables)	Actual sessions (E&P list)	Notes on activity	Contacts (E&P list)				
				Total	Creative sessions		Wellbeing sessions	Pathways Advice
					E&P / UoL	Life Rooms	Life Rooms	
		<b>Pathways</b>	Pathways core skills	2				2
<b>20/01/2020</b>	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> Mental Health Awareness Drama Living with addictions Introduction to understanding depression Meet the team Weigh to go drop in	Story Spinning Storytelling Storytime drop in <i>(Did not run)</i> <i>(Did not run)</i> <i>(Did not run)</i> <i>(Did not run)</i> <i>(Did not run)</i> <i>(Did not run)</i> <i>(Did not run)</i>	Story development exercises Storytelling performance skills Listening to a story	5 10 4	5 10 4			
<b>21/01/2020</b>	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Delivered - not on timetable)</i> Introduction to self esteem Women's mental health Meet the team Game social drop in	Drama Conversation Cafe Uke for Beginners Storytelling "Action on Addiction" Drama <i>(Did not run)</i> <i>(Did not run)</i> <i>(Did not run)</i> <i>(Did not run)</i>	Introduction to drama skills Conversing with new people Ukulele skills Storytelling performance skills Drama workshop	8 8 10 6 16	8 8 6 16	10		
<b>27/01/2020</b>	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> Introduction to confidence and assertiveness Meet the team	Introduction to Creative Writing Drama Living with Addictions Treasure your wellbeing Storytelling <i>(Did not run)</i> <i>(Did not run)</i>	Creative writing skills Introduction to drama skills Discussion Wellbeing exercises Storytelling performance skills	5 12 1 2 6	5 12 6		1 2	

The Life Rooms at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre: Preliminary evaluation of the pilot, 6 January - 17 March 2020

Date	Planned sessions (Timetables)	Actual sessions (E&P list)	Notes on activity	Contacts (E&P list)				
				Total	Creative sessions		Wellbeing sessions	Pathways Advice
					E&P / UoL	Life Rooms	Life Rooms	
	Arts and crafts drop in	<i>(Did not run)</i> <b>Pathways</b>	Pathways core skills	4				4
<b>28/01/2020</b> <b>(Open day)</b>	<i>(Delivered - not on timetable)</i> <i>(Delivered - not on timetable)</i> <i>(Delivered - not on timetable)</i>	Stand-Up Comedy Drama Storytelling	For Action on Addiction Drama workshop Storytelling performance skills	16 14 5		16		
<b>JANUARY TOTALS</b>				290	204	38	42	6
<b>FEBRUARY</b>								
<b>03/02/2020</b>	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> Living with addictions Storytime Stories drop-in	Tree of Life Confidence Through Drama Singing for wellbeing drop in Writing for wellbeing Understanding depression Story Spinning <i>(Did not run)</i> <i>(Did not run)</i> <i>(Did not run)</i> <b>Pathways</b>	Wellbeing session Drama Singing Creative writing skills Wellbeing Story development exercises  Pathways core skills	6 12 2 4 6 4  2			6    6	2
<b>04/02/2020</b>	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> Women and mental health Storytime drop in Arts and crafts drop in	Understanding anxiety Confidence through theatre performance 1/8 Music Appreciation Confidence through storytelling 1/8 <i>(Did not run)</i> <i>(Did not run)</i> <i>(Did not run)</i>	Wellbeing Drama session - building to performance Listening and discussing music Storytelling performance skills	5 10 8 10		10 8	5	
<b>10/02/2020</b>	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Confidence and assertiveness Confidence Through Drama Living with Addictions drop in	Wellbeing session Drama session Wellbeing	3 14 3		14	3  3	

The Life Rooms at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre: Preliminary evaluation of the pilot, 6 January – 17 March 2020

Date	Planned sessions (Timetables)	Actual sessions (E&P list)	Notes on activity	Contacts (E&P list)				
				Total	Creative sessions		Wellbeing sessions	Pathways Advice
					E&P / UoL	Life Rooms	Life Rooms	
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> Stories drop in - all day	Singing for wellbeing drop in Writing for wellbeing Stand-up comedy Story Spinning Story time drop in <i>(Did not run)</i>	Singing Creative writing skills Stand-up comedy skills Story development exercises Listening to a story	3 8 3 1 0	3 8  1 0	3		
<b>11/02/2020</b>	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Delivered - not on timetable)</i> Mental Health Awareness Life Writing Music Appreciation Managing Anxiety Storytime drop in Arts and crafts drop in	Confidence through theatre performance 2/8 Confidence through storytelling 2/8 My Time song and story <i>(Did not run)</i> <i>(Did not run)</i> <i>(Did not run)</i> <i>(Did not run)</i> <i>(Did not run)</i> <i>(Did not run)</i>	Drama session – building to a performance Storytelling performance skills	15 5 30	15 5 30			
<b>17/02/2020</b>	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> <i>(Planned and delivered)</i> Living life to the full	Confidence Through Drama Living with Addictions drop in Singing for wellbeing drop in Writing for wellbeing Stand-up comedy Story Spinning Story time drop in Stories drop in <i>(Did not run)</i> <b>Pathways</b>	Drama techniques Wellbeing Singing session Creative writing skills Stand-up comedy skills Story development exercises Listening to stories Telling your own stories Pathways core skills	9 1 1 4 5 2 3 2 2	9  1 4  2 3 2	5	1	2
<b>18/02/2020</b>	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Confidence through theatre performance 3/8	Theatre skills building to performance	12	12			

The Life Rooms at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre: Preliminary evaluation of the pilot, 6 January – 17 March 2020

Date	Planned sessions (Timetables)	Actual sessions (E&P list)	Notes on activity	Contacts (E&P list)				
				Total	Creative sessions		Wellbeing sessions	Pathways Advice
					E&P / UoL	Life Rooms	Life Rooms	
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Life Writing	Writing skills	8	8			
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Beginners Ukulele	Playing uke	9		9		
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Confidence through storytelling 3/8	Storytelling performance skills	4	4			
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Story time drop in	Listening to stories	10	10			
	Self Esteem	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
	Treasure your wellbeing	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
	Arts and crafts drop in	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
		<b>Pathways</b>	Pathways core skills	3				3
<b>24/02/2020</b>	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Confidence Through Drama	Drama skills	5	5			
<b>(Open Day)</b>	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Singing for wellbeing drop in	Singing	5	5			
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Writing for Wellbeing	Creative writing skills	5	5			
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Story spinning	Story development exercises	2	2			
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Storytime drop in	Listening to stories	5	5			
		<b>Pathways</b>	Pathways core skills	3				3
<b>25/02/2020</b>	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Confidence through theatre performance 4/8	Building up to theatre performance	12	12			
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Life Writing	Wellbeing writing session	10	10			
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Beginners Ukulele	Playing ukulele	10		10		
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Confidence through storytelling 4/8	Storytelling performance skills	4	4			
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Story time drop in	Listening to stories	3	3			
	Managing Anxiety	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
	Mental Health Awareness	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
	Arts and crafts drop in	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
<b>FEBRUARY TOTALS</b>				293	224	35	24	10
<b>MARCH</b>								
<b>02/03/2020</b>	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Understanding sleep	Wellbeing	2			2	
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Confidence Through Drama	Drama session	9	9			
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Mindful Stretching		3		3		



The Life Rooms at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre: Preliminary evaluation of the pilot, 6 January – 17 March 2020

Date	Planned sessions (Timetables)	Actual sessions (E&P list)	Notes on activity	Contacts (E&P list)				
				Total	Creative sessions		Wellbeing sessions	Pathways Advice
					E&P / UoL	Life Rooms	Life Rooms	
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Living with addictions drop in	Wellbeing	2			2	
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Singing for wellbeing drop in	Singing	14	14			
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Writing for Wellbeing	Creative writing skills	7	7			
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Get your groove on!	Wellbeing movement session	1	1			
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Story spinning	Story development exercises	4	4			
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Understanding anxiety	Wellbeing session	5			5	
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Story time drop in	Listening to a story	5	5			
	<i>(Delivered - not on timetable)</i>	ESOL/ refugee taster drama	drama session	12	12			
	<i>(Delivered - not on timetable)</i>	Liverpool Carers Taster drama	Drama session	17	17			
	Armchair exercises	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
	Stories and Tree of Life drop in	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
		<b>Pathways</b>	Pathways core skills	1				1
<b>03/03/2020</b>	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Stand-up comedy for beginners 1/5	Stand-up comedy session	5		5		
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Confidence through theatre performance 5/8	Theatre session building to performance	12	12			
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Music appreciation		10		10		
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Confidence through storytelling 5/8	Storytelling performance skills	3	3			
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Understanding depression	Wellbeing session	7			7	
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Story time drop in	Listening to a story	6	6			
	<i>(Delivered - not on timetable)</i>	Beginners Ukulele	Ukulele skills for wellbeing	10		10		
	Arts and crafts drop in	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
		<b>Pathways</b>	Pathways core skills	1				1
<b>09/03/2020</b>	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Mental health awareness	Wellbeing session discussing mental health	1			1	
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Confidence Through Drama	Drama skills	12	12			
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Mindful Stretching	wellbeing/mindfulness	2		2		
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Singing for wellbeing drop in	Singing wellbeing	3	3			
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Writing for wellbeing	Creative writing skills	4	4			

The Life Rooms at The Liverpool Playhouse Theatre: Preliminary evaluation of the pilot, 6 January – 17 March 2020

Date	Planned sessions (Timetables)	Actual sessions (E&P list)	Notes on activity	Contacts (E&P list)				
				Total	Creative sessions		Wellbeing sessions	Pathways Advice
					E&P / UoL	Life Rooms	Life Rooms	
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Get your groove on!	Dancing for wellbeing	3	3			
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Story Spinning	Story development exercises	4	4			
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Managing anxiety	Wellbeing	1			1	
	Living with Addictions drop in	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
	Armchair exercises	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
	Storytime	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
	Stories and Tree of Life drop in	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
<b>10/03/2020</b>	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Stand-up comedy for beginners 2/5	Stand-up Comedy skills	5		5		
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Confidence through theatre performance 6/8	Drama skills leading to performance	12	12			
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Music appreciation	Wellbeing session	10		10		
	<i>(Planned and delivered)</i>	Confidence through storytelling 6/8	Storytelling performance skills	4	4			
	<i>(Delivered - not on timetable)</i>	Beginners Ukulele	Ukulele skill development	10			10	
	Living life to the full	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
	Story and chat drop in	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
	Arts and crafts drop in	<i>(Did not run)</i>						
<b>MARCH TOTALS</b>				207	132	45	28	2
<b>TOTALS: JANUARY - MARCH 2020</b>				790	560	118	94	18

## Appendix 7 – Monthly attendance figures

January				Session contacts					Gen enq	New members	E&P Ticket enq	Comments
Date	Foot -fall	Pathways		Life Rooms data		E&P data						
		LR data	E&P data	LR	E&P	LR - WB	LR - C	E&P				
07/01/2020	99	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	95		44	promo day
13/01/2020	185	0	0	20	40	16	0	40	125			open day
14/01/2020	212	1	2	29	47	23	12	65	135	28	40	very cold day
20/01/2020	38	3	0	11	16	0	0	19	8	8	25	
21/01/2020	71	3	0	16	29	0	10	38	23	9	22	
27/01/2020	47	3	4	7	20	3	0	23	17	4	38	
28/01/2020	67	1	0	24	0	0	16	19	42	4	50	open day
Column totals	719	11	6	111	152	42	38	204	445	53	219	
LR totals							80					
LR + E&P totals					263			284				
MC Report		14		108						53		

February				Session contacts					Gen enq	New members	E&P Ticket enq	Comments
Date	Foot -fall	Pathways		Life Rooms data		E&P data						
		LR data	E&P data	LR	E&P	LR - WB	LR - C	E&P				
03/02/2020	61	2	2	12	22	12	0	22	25	4	37	
04/02/2020	60	0		13	20	5	8	20	27	0	22	
10/02/2020	66	0		9	38	6	3	26	19	3	17	
11/02/2020	127	0		15	39	0	0	50	73	5	26	
17/02/2020	67	3	2	10	18	1	5	21	36	3	37	
18/02/2020	76	2	3	15	20	0	9	34	39	9	27	
24/02/2020	49	3	3	0	17	0	0	22	29	5	26	open day - no RC
25/02/2020	62	0		20	19	0	10	29	23	12	40	
Column totals	568	10	10	94	193	24	35	224	271	41	232	
LR totals							59					
LR + E&P totals					287			283				
MC Report		14		94						41		

**March**

Date	Foot-fall	Session contacts										
		Pathways		Life Rooms data		E&P data			Gen enq	New members	E&P Ticket enq	Comments
		LR data	E&P data	LR	E&P	LR - WB	LR - C	E&P				
02/03/2020		1	1	5	47	9	3	69	65	35	54	Press day / CV
03/03/2020		4	1	33	14	7	25	21	37	9	27	CV
09/03/2020		1	0	7	24	2	2	26	40	3	37	CV
10/03/2020		1	0	28	11	10	15	16	37	3	43	CV
Column totals	N/A	7	2	73	96	28	45	132	179	50	161	
LR totals							73					
LR + E&P totals					169			205				
MC Report		7		N/A						43		

## Appendix 8 – Qualitative Analysis Themes

### a) Staff, volunteer and group leaders

Source: Online Survey

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<u>City Centre Location</u>	Great location Accessible Brings in new clients Are they the right demographic?	
<u>The physical environment</u>	Iconic building Needs updating Layout of the building is difficult	
<u>Creative offer</u>	Drama Enjoyment Pathway to wellbeing Additional benefits	
<u>Not a Life Rooms</u>	Creative offer detracted from wellbeing support Life Rooms got lost	
<u>Collaboration</u>	Clash of cultures	NHS governance procedures Different approaches Different visions
	Organisation and procedures	Volunteers not used well Disorganised Rushed in the morning Communication / philosophy
	Positives	Eye opening Enthusiasm / Commitment Good model Partnership worked well
<u>Community</u>	Opportunity to co-create Sense of community Meeting people No labels Mutual support	
<u>Rewarding</u>	Enjoyable Challenging and rewarding Seeing new faces New service	
<u>Looking forward – learning</u>	Promotion / marketing Session planning / development Working relationships Use of the space Registration Champions Research boundaries	
<u>Looking forward – COVID</u>	Opportunities Online provision Prematurely paused	

b) **Session participants**

Sources: The Life Rooms feedback sheets & Online Survey

<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>
<u>The sessions were great</u>	
<u>The sessions were fun / feel good factor</u>	
<u>Increasing awareness of others</u>	
<u>Group development</u>	<i>Building a team</i>
	<i>Meeting other groups</i>
	<i>Supporting group development</i>
<u>Learning</u>	
<u>Building confidence / Improving self-worth</u>	
<u>Using the space</u>	
<u>Will be back</u>	