



RISE

Reducing Inequalities, Supporting Employment





Better Connect.

Founded in 2007, Better Connect is a non-profit organisation based in Yorkshire, designing and leading innovative partnership projects that transform lives across the region

- Designed and led dozens of programmes across Yorkshire
- Created partnerships with over 200 local organisations
- Secured more than £30 million funding and social investment
- Provided specialist support to organisations to help them become more impactful, sustainable and resilient
- Become a trusted partner and leader

“ Better Connect is a fantastic organisation with a diverse, accessible, and person led-ethos. They provide an invaluable bridge between organisations and funders, helping to maximise the potential of vital community-based projects throughout the county. ”

Emily Havercroft, Deputy Chief Executive Office, Up for Yorkshire.





Our experienced experts manage programmes from finance (bidding, monitoring profiles and targets) to communication (showing impact and building strong relationships)

We connect funders and community-based delivery partners through strong links with community organisations across Yorkshire

We create and manage better partnership projects by bringing together organisations with common values



Delivery Partners
Our delivery partners are passionate VCSE organisations who are experts in offering high quality support



Funders
We finance projects through a range of funders who trust Better Connect to lead strong partnership programmes



Participants

Individuals who have recognised that they want to make a change in their lives and require support to achieve this



We believe in better partnership management and we do not compete with partners for frontline delivery

We are responsible for our funding, demonstrate our impact and we are experts in contract and grant management



Since 2007, we have supported over **8,320** participants through our key programmes across Yorkshire

Over **4,000** of these participants entered into employment, education, training or job-search as a result of the support

Who do we support?

- Over **2,700** have a disability or health condition
- **985** are from ethnic minority backgrounds
- Over **900** are current or ex-offenders
- **400** have been affected by homelessness or housing exclusion

Each participant that we support via our programmes faces a completely unique set of circumstances. Our programmes and partners provide holistic, person-centred support to help people to navigate their circumstances, overcome barriers and achieve their aspirations

**Data from Action Towards Inclusion, Thriving at Work, Talent Match, ESF Community Grants*

The Background



- RISE (Reducing Inequalities, Supporting Employment) is a new programme taking place in York, funded by City of York Council via the People and Skills pillar of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- Established in April 2023, RISE was built on the foundations of Action Towards Inclusion (ATI), an ESF/Lottery-funded programme providing person-centred employment and skills support across York, North Yorkshire and East Riding between 2017 and 2023.
- The success of ATI became a lifeline for a lot of partners and participants in York, and when provision ended in March 2023, City of York Council recognised the importance of continuing the provision under UKSPF. RISE began in May 2023 and currently runs until March 2024, with the potential to be continued for Year 3 of UKSPF, until March 2025.
- RISE is delivered in the community by specialist keyworkers and intervention partners within locally-rooted community organisations.
- The aim of RISE is to provide tailored, holistic, person-centred employability and skills support to people who are economically inactive and furthest away from the labour market, supporting them to overcome barriers to work.

Our RISE partnership in York



Specialisms within this partnership

- Employment Support
- Mental Health
- Physical Health/Activity
- Autism and Neurodivergence
- Finance and Debt
- Specialist Support for Women
- Domestic Abuse
- Housing
- Basic Skills and Training
- Inclusion and Diversity
- Self Employment
- Support for carers/people in care



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Demographics in York so far...

RISE demographic data:

Number of interventions delivered – **15** (York Learning skills interventions)

Average length of time on RISE – **11 weeks** (this will increase)

Average RISE rating (by participants) – **5 out of 5** (Excellent)

Gender – **57% Female**, 42% Male, 1% Other

Average age – **37 years old** (lowest 16, highest 65)

Ethnicity – **87% White British**, 7% African-Black British, 4% Other-Asian British, 2% Pakistani-Asian British

Disability – **63%** disclose a disability or work-limiting health condition

Mental health – **67%** disclose a mental health condition (diagnosed or undiagnosed)

Neurodivergence – **43%** disclose neurodivergence

Offender/ex-offender – **3%** disclose a history of offending

Homelessness – **3%** disclose homelessness

Jobless household – **54%** disclose living in a jobless household and **43%** disclose living in a single adult household.

Dependent children – **23%** disclose living with dependent children



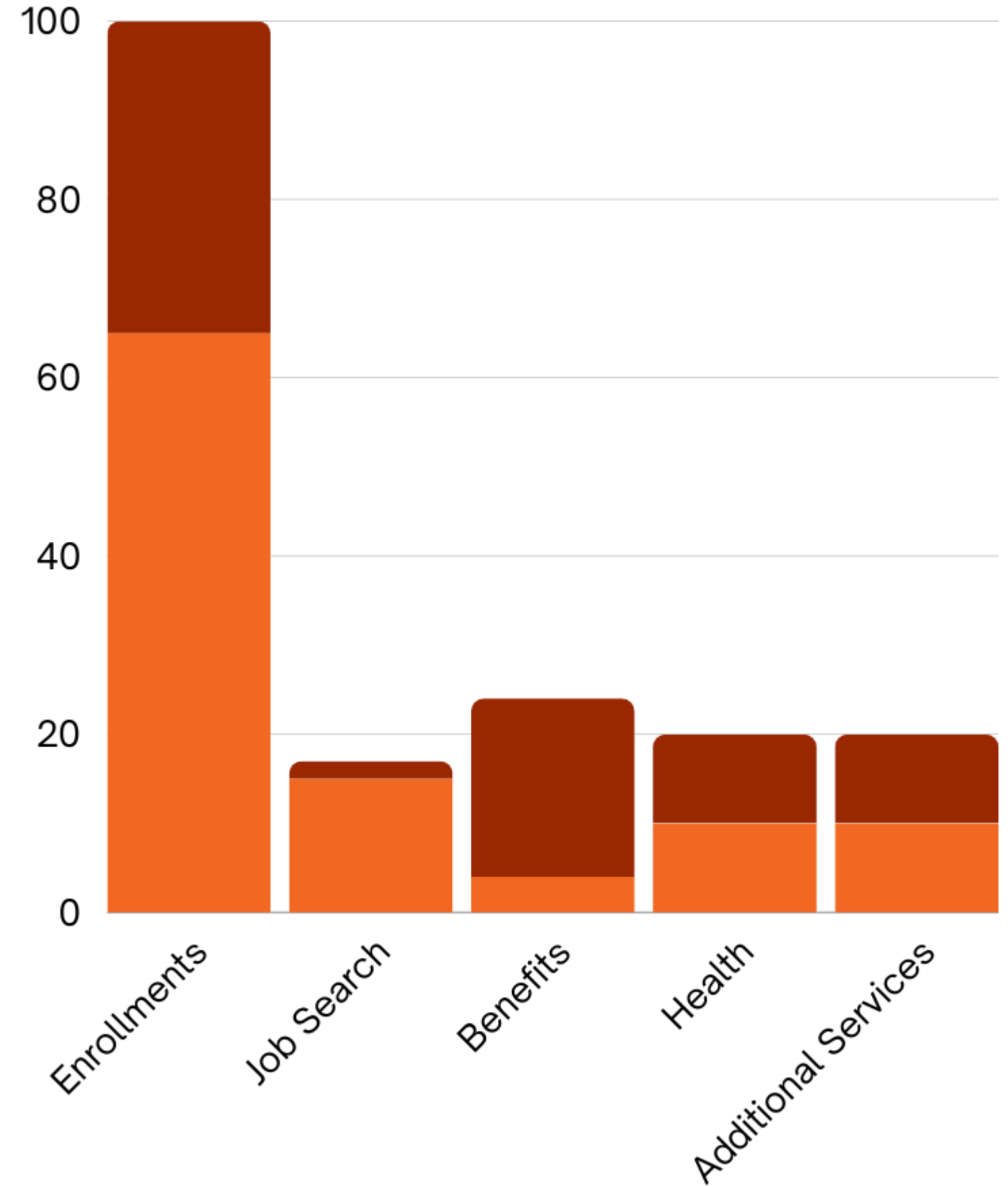


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Outputs in York so far...

RISE Outputs:

- People enrolled onto the programme – 65% (65/100)
- People supported to engage in job-searching – 88% (15/17)
- People supported to engage with the benefits system – 20% (4/20)
- People supported with physical and mental health – 50% (10/20)
- People supported to gain employment – 70% (14/20)
- Effective working between keyworkers and additional services – 50% (10/20)



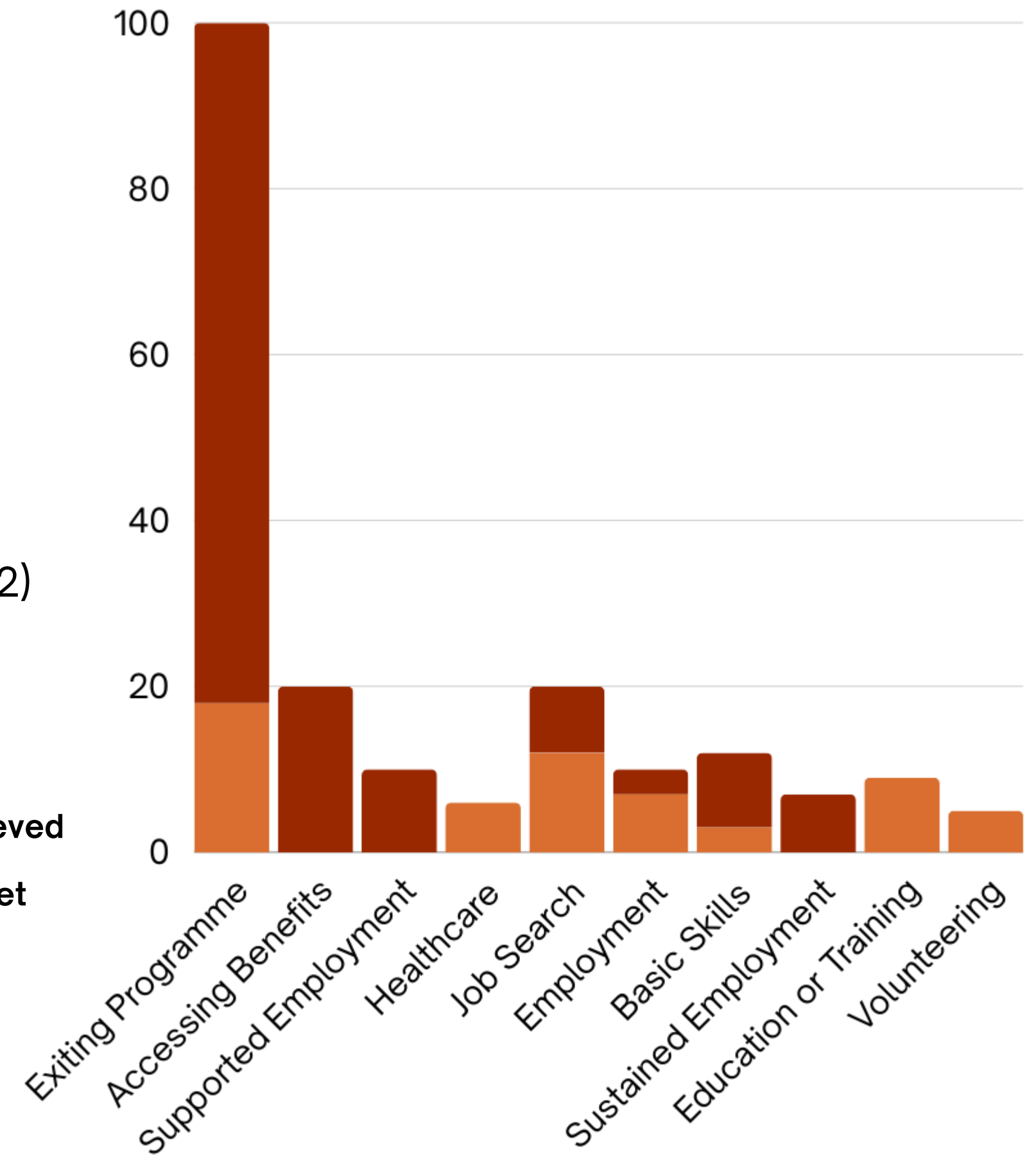


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Outcomes in York so far...

RISE Outcomes:

- People exiting the programme – 18% (18/100)
- People accessing benefits they are entitled to – 0% (0/20)
- People in supported employment – 0% (0/10)
- People engaging with mainstream healthcare services – 120% (6/5)
- People engaged in job-searching – 60% (12/20)
- People in employment – 70% (7/10)
- People with basic skills (English, maths, digital and ESOL) – 25% (3/12)
- People sustaining employment for 6 months – 0% (0/7)
- People in education or training – 900% (9/0 – non UKSPF outcome)
- People in volunteering – 500% (5/0 – non UKSPF outcome)



YORK MIND CASE STUDY

Michael's Journey on RISE



I was a 30-year old living at home with my parents with no job or friends. I believed my social anxiety would shackle me for the rest of my life. I was scared to go outside and even look at people (...)

*Ben was warm, kind and understanding – that made it really easy to be open and reveal my honest thoughts, struggles and history. **After establishing that trust, my emotional well-being was on the rise which made the prospect of work/employment very attainable.***

*I've learned that I am capable of many things (...) Ben has taught me to think in a way that when I do fall into a hole, I have the knowledge and tools to get back up (...) Of course emotional support has been key along with excellent employment support. **Ben has helped me to establish short-term and long-term career goals and also to create a CV that enhances my employment prospects. Having these goals and something to aim for really puts weight and meaning to the centre of my life and has acted as a springboard to my mental well-being. The counselling and job support have been balanced seamlessly.***

*If you find the courage to reach out to RISE, I can only promise good things. **Each week feels like a victory** no matter how small you may think (...)*



YORK Learning CASE STUDY

Kate's Journey on RISE



Key learnings



- The importance of the **person-centred** approach
- Supporting those who are economically inactive **takes time** and therefore requires longer-term investment
- The flexibility and diversity of the Keyworker model brings **strength and challenge**
- Do not underestimate the **complexity** of participants. This requires a blend of personal support and employability support
- Barriers do not end with employment, **they change**. Highlights the importance of in-work support
- **The importance of Keyworker peer support**



RISE Peer Support Network

Research conducted by Dr. Annie Irvine on the ATI project (Research Associate at the ESRC Centre for Society and Mental Health, part of Kings College London) suggested peer support would be a valuable learning to take forward into future projects:

“Mutual support among keyworkers is valuable. Being part of a larger keyworker group within a delivery partnership provides practical and emotional support. Strengthening peer support networks between delivery partners may be beneficial”

We took this research and developed a Peer Support Network. Thus far, we have facilitated two network meetings. Creating this network has allowed the RISE partnership to:

- Collaborate, share ideas on how to best support participants.
- Troubleshoot problems/challenges.
- Strengthen connections & wellbeing.
- Share resources.

Read the RISE Peer Support blog articles here:

- <https://betterconnect.org.uk/better-connections-wellbeing-for-keyworkers/>



Looking Forward



The demand for this support remains strong and the ATI and RISE programmes have been highly successful in providing critical help to participants in York. We would ask for this support to continue.

Further research being undertaken on RISE by Dr Annie Irvine in January 2024.

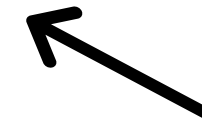
We are designing a new programme, Rise 2 Thrive, which will extend the successful Keyworker model to support both individuals furthest away from work (economically inactive) and individuals within work to rise and thrive in their lives and at work. This supports E33 and E37 objectives.

What would make this support even more effective...

Supporting our VCSE delivery partners to thrive and do more for York participants by providing longer contracts.

Continued focus on streamlining processes for monitoring to increase time with participants.

Connect with us



Take a photo of
me



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