



Leicestershire Partnership  
NHS Trust



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Mental health project viewed as 'outstanding', offering exciting future for bread making in NHS**



A full report has been published on the activities and outcomes of the NHS Leicester Bread Clubs project, [launched in January 2018](#) by Planet Leicester Bakers and Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust. Commenting on the success of the project, Catherine Crook from funders Time to Change Leicester says: "We're really pleased with the work Planet Leicester Bakers and the Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust have done – they have provided a safe space to speak about mental health and wellbeing. They are an outstanding example of the kind of work Time to Change Leicester hopes to promote in the city."

The NHS Leicester Bread Clubs project has trained 13 volunteers from across Leicester and Leicestershire in simple bread making and conversation management skills. The project then supported an initial eight bakers to run 'Bread & Chat' sessions in community settings. Many more sessions are already planned.

The project has been incredibly well received in all groups and both Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust and Planet Leicester Bakers, who have worked together to design and deliver the project, are thrilled with the excitement and interest it has created. Together they have delivered three training sessions for NHS volunteers and four initial 'Bake & Chat' community sessions held in Thurmaston, Belgrave, at the NHS mental health Crisis House and in Beaumont Leys.

Rob Melling, Head of Community Development and project lead at Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust, said:

"From the moment we announced the project we were bowled over by the interest and excitement it created. The volunteer training and 'Bake & Chat' community sessions gave people opportunities to enjoy a new activity, get out of the house to meet people and spend time chatting about the pressures of everyday life. As a Trust we are always looking for new ways to help people improve their mental and physical wellbeing – this project is proving to be a great way to do that."

The bread baking is already continuing with the help of the volunteers. Sessions have been held with residents at the Carpenter's Arms in Six Hills, whilst more baking will take place shortly at the Bradgate Mental Health Unit. The NHS trust has committed to continuing this activity through purchasing 'bread kits' for volunteers to use with groups and is hoping to introduce the activity in other NHS settings to aid people in improving their mental health and well-being.

Meeting new people, learning new skills and achieving something new that gives a sense of pride are all valuable experiences for developing better mental health and resilience. In addition, as Michelle Stratford, Founder of local community business Planet Leicester Bakers explains, wider community health and well-being can also benefit:

“This project has demonstrated the power of bread to bring people from across communities together to support each other. In itself hand-making bread is relaxing and therapeutic, but it also offers therapy to communities, providing a safe and comfortable environment and activity for diverse people to gather around. I am delighted the local NHS is embracing this kind of approach by equipping people with skills that can only help in building better mental and physical health and therefore stronger communities.”

The end of project report is available to download via this link: [NHS Leicester Bread Clubs](#)

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

- For further information and interview requests please contact:  
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**Michelle Stratford**, Founder, Planet Leicester Bakers, Tel: 07816 178022; Email: [planetleicesterbakers@outlook.com](mailto:planetleicesterbakers@outlook.com)
- Leicester Bread Clubs is a new initiative from Planet Leicester Bakers ([planetleicesterbakers.co.uk](http://planetleicesterbakers.co.uk)). Local people are being encouraged to think about how they can use and introduce this ancient baking skill to others, their friends and families, through setting up an informal Leicester Bread Club locally. For more information on Leicester Bread Clubs and the work of Planet Leicester Bakers go to the latest newsletter at <http://www.planetleicesterbakers.co.uk/news/planet-leicester-news-3-now/>
- Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust: Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) provides community health, mental health and learning disabilities services for the one million people living in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. We have a budget in excess of £275 million and employ approximately 5,500 staff. For more information visit: [www.leicspart.nhs.uk](http://www.leicspart.nhs.uk).
- Our registered charity is called Raising Health (charity number 1057361). The charity fundraises to support excellent care initiatives, equipment and innovations which go above and beyond core NHS provision to enhance the experience of our patients, service users and staff. See [www.raisinghealth.org.uk](http://www.raisinghealth.org.uk)
- Time to Change Leicester: Time to Change aims to end the stigma and discrimination faced by people with mental health problems in our city. Go to

[www.leicester.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/public-health/improve-your-health/mental-health/time-to-change/](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/public-health/improve-your-health/mental-health/time-to-change/)

- Planet Leicester Bakers is part of the Bread Angels network. To find out about the network, bread and mental health, go to <http://www.virtuousbread.com/bread-and-conversation/improve-your-mental-health-by-baking-bread/>