Spice Time Credits
Health and Social Care
Case Studies
Spice Time Credits

Spice Time Credits are a social currency developed initially in South Wales and how being rolled out across Wales and England. In England Spice are currently developing large scale community and health and social care projects across London, Norfolk, Wiltshire and Lancashire. Spice Time Credits are supporting over 300 organisations to develop new approaches to coproduction, sustainability, service provision and commissioning with professionals, service users, funders, commissioners, communities and the private sector.

Spice Time Credit notes

How Spice Time Credits work: everyone has something to give

People are thanked with Time Credits for contributing time to their community or service. They then ‘spend’ Time Credits to access events, training and leisure services, or to thank others in turn. The system is sustainable as it is coordinated by existing community facing staff, and because spending opportunities access under-used community resources as well as direct (unmediated) exchanges between people.

Earning Time Credits: Services and local community groups identify current and new opportunities for people to give their time. The new opportunities are based on the interests, skills and availability of local people, and are enabled and supported by community services.

Spending Time Credits: Public, community and private organisations identify ways for people to spend Time Credits in their services or at events. This can be ‘spare capacity’ at theatres or swimming pools for example, or for community services a way of recognising
and thanking people for the contributions they have made (trips for young people on free school meals become trips for young people who have contributed). Spice spending menus include a wide range of community organisations as well as higher profile opportunities such as The Barbican and Tower of London.

**Why use Time Credits?**

Time Credits encourage more people to get involved in local community organisations and to give more time, increasing community action and strengthening local networks. Individuals are then able to access new opportunities in the local community, such as swimming, theatre, training, cinema, exhibitions and tea dances. Both earning and spending Time Credits can build confidence and support health and wellbeing.

Using Time Credits also encourages professionals to work in new ways, collaborating with service users and citizens to think about how services can be run in co-productive ways that encourage participation by the whole community, sharing skills and assets. This can encourage a greater sense of community integration and enable improvements in service delivery as they are shaped by those that use them.

**For more information on Spice’s work please contact:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David Russell</td>
<td>Head of Health and Social Care</td>
<td><a href="mailto:david@justaddspice.org">david@justaddspice.org</a>, 074 2946 4265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosie Farrer</td>
<td>Head of Localities</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rosie@justaddspice.org">rosie@justaddspice.org</a>, 074 2931 3860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Dineen</td>
<td>Head of Wales Programmes</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ben@justaddspice.org">ben@justaddspice.org</a>, 07919073726</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Look Ahead Care and Support, London

Look Ahead support about 6000 people across London and the South East providing care and support through accommodation based services. Time Credits are being integrated throughout service delivery as a tool to implement Look Ahead’s coproduction strategy and enhance individual and service outcomes.

This programme is being rolled out through training across 20 services in London. These range from large hostels to longer term residential services supporting people with severe mental health issues and disabilities. By the end of the year 20 services will have gone through the full training programme with hundreds of customers earning and spending Time Credits.

“The customer hadn’t been out into central London for a long time and to see the look on his face was amazing. I want to earn more credits so I can take more customers out and about – maybe I will do something for myself as well!” Look Ahead Volunteer & Customer

“At the beginning it was felt that it was separate to what staff normally do – there wasn’t much of a connection between time credits and day to day work. But as a team now, we all are aware of time credits – it has become part of the available opportunities at Cannon Street Road” Yugi, Staff member

“What’s great about time credits now is that customers are starting to think of their own ways of helping the service to earn time credits – sometimes it’s the little things that can be really important and they enjoy earning” Yuji, Staff member

“The most useful thing about the Spice / Look Ahead Learning Programme is sharing experience with other services. The learning sessions are good but being with staff and customers of other services is most important. Peer support is key – I have learnt lots from other services and hopefully I have taught them things as well.” Staff member
Chooselife Wales, Carmarthenshire

Chooselife Wales are a drug and alcohol service in the Seaside area of Llanelli and volunteers have supported their work for many years. Volunteers provide support to service users, assisting in the facilitation of family sessions, lunch clubs or providing a much needed space to talk. Many volunteers themselves have been through the centre as service users.

Chooselife Wales have used Time Credits as a means of engaging everyone at the centre: service users and volunteers. Service users began earning credits internally by supporting the lunch club, cooking meals, laying tables and cleaning up after sessions as well as undertaking tasks such as litter picks and environmental work that enable them to play a positive role in the local community.

“Thank you so much for last week’s tickets for the Scarlets [rugby game], our service users had a fantastic time and they have become more motivated since their visit to the game.” Lindy Butler, Team Leader

Time Credits have changed the day to day running of Chooselife Wales as service users are now asking for activities that they can participate in and staying longer at the centre. They have even had to put on more activities throughout the day. This really supports the work of Chooselife Wales as they would like to extend their opening hours to provide extended support provision to help service users break addiction and restore their lives.

PLUS Services, London

PLUS are a service provider to approximately 200 people with learning disabilities and mental health problems in Lewisham. They wanted to use time credits to deepen the involvement of service users in their service delivery and started using time credits in May 2012. People are now earning credits for participating in a decision making committee, interviewing staff and co-delivering services. They have been spending their credits in the local community, particularly on group trips to the local bowling alley.

PLUS have seen time credits having a positive impact on people's confidence and wellbeing, as well as supporting new friendships. One service user described how earning credits and spending them with others made him feel as “Happy, cheerful...If you get 4 its good for two people, they go bowling with you and you make friends. It's a good idea. Not sitting at home looking at the four walls indoors, you can go and earn credits.” As one support worker at PLUS noted, "It's given them some independence and choice...it has given them so much encouragement to participate in day to day life and encouragement in saying, yes, I can do these things"
Kelvin’s mother has vascular dementia and he has been her full-time carer for 5 years. Being a carer has had a financial impact as he is unable to go out to work and depends on carers’ allowance, and has also had an impact on his life in other ways, as he has to be available 24 hours a day. In his own words, “you’re on call 24/7, you’re always watching the clock or your mobile phone, hoping you won’t get that call…”

Kelvin is a member of Carers Lewisham and attends coffee mornings, fundraising activities and meetings, for example with SLaM (South London and Maudsley NHS Trust) and the DWP (Department of Work & Pensions) where carers are invited to feed in their experiences and opinions. Kelvin has earned time credits for these meetings, and he feels they have really encouraged participation from carers. “Getting them [time credits] makes you feel you can say something, that you are being listened to.”

Kelvin spent the time credits he earned on Millwall football tickets for himself and a friend, something he previously used to be able to do when working but can now no longer afford. Being able to do this was a big deal to him, as he said “Having a day out with my mate was something I used to take for granted. We made a whole day of it, it was absolutely great”. Kelvin’s friend has also earned time credits and plans to take him to another match soon in return.

Time credits have made Kelvin feel that his contribution to the community, in caring for his mum, is appreciated and recognised. This came from being given the credits by Carers Lewisham, and the experience of spending his credits. The support and interest shown by Jason, the manager at Millwall, in enabling him to collect his tickets in advance and asking him about his caring role made him feel valued; as Kelvin said “For him to email me, call to confirm, meet me to collect the tickets and ask about being a carer was very nice – he’s a busy man”. Kelvin has also seen other carers he knows getting out and doing new activities such as tennis with time credits. They are enabling carers to access things they would otherwise be unable to; “Carers can’t afford to do the things we’d like to do.”

To hear more about Lewisham Time Credits and Kelvin’s story search for Lewisham Time Credits on You Tube.
**Lewisham Day Centres, London**

The Lewisham day centres service provides day services to a wide range of adults from across Lewisham with very varied health and social care support requirements, ranging from moderate physical and learning disabilities to more critical disabilities, mental health problems and dementia.

Spice has worked closely with the service to engage users and staff in Time Credits and identify ways they can be earned and spent, as there are a range of challenges to be overcome. **The overall day centres service has incorporated time credits into their central service user committee, recognising the contributions people make to shaping the service**, and several of the day centres have now started to use time credits in a range of ways across the different service, including:

- the GROW project where service users give time for garden maintenance, watering, landscaping, planting and garden construction, and have spent credits on going bowling and to Millwall Football Club.

- Mulberry Day Centre’s monthly themed discos and activities that are open to all services users and providers of services. Service users earn time credits for participation in preparation and planning and for supporting delivery of the events. The events programme is open for users of other day services to attend in exchange for time credits.

- Ladywell Day Centre’s service user committee were very involved in the decision to develop a time credits programme, and have identified a number of earning activities, including volunteering in the on-site shop, helping to set up and run activities, sitting on the committee and interviewing new staff.

**Age UK Lancashire and Chorley Older People’s Forum, Lancashire**

Age UK runs a range of services across Lancashire including the Chorley Lifestyle Centre, a drop-in day service for over 50s offering lunch, tea and coffee, social activities and classes such as IT, singing, games, a luncheon club and external speakers. Many of these activities are delivered by volunteers, the majority of whom are older people. **“It’s nice to be thanked for your time and I can do Tai-chi now, it gives me chance to try new things with other people”**

*Member*

Chorley Older People’s Forum is also part of the Time Credits network and aims to give a voice to older people in Chorley, influencing on their behalf on service provision particularly with the council. Currently members are earning Time Credits for the day to day running of forum meetings and occasional events, but the forum has ambitions for Time Credits to bring in more people to play an active role in shaping its work and to represent older people in the local community.
Peter Thompson, West Norfolk

Peter is from King’s Lynn and volunteers at the West Norfolk Community Bank, part of the Norfolk Credit Union. Following experience of depression and a breakdown that led to him losing his job and spending time in prison, he was invited to volunteer when he went to join the credit union.

Peter felt he had “lots of skills that were going to waste. I needed to be with people, and I wasn’t having any contact with them. The Credit Union couldn’t exist without volunteers, so to be able to say thanks is a really good thing. It’s saying, ‘we appreciate your time, so we’ve joined this scheme.’” He also feels they can be used to deepen volunteering in organisations; “It adds another side to volunteering - it supports that social and networking side of it that you don’t usually get outside of a workplace. It gives volunteering an added dimension...it makes it a richer experience”.

It’s opened up new opportunities to me. I do things now I wouldn’t have done otherwise, like going to the gym regularly, because I wouldn’t have been able to afford it. It’s opened up social avenues – I’ve now got a group of ‘nodding acquaintances’ at the gym, which helps you to anchor yourself, to anchor your place in society, and your sense of identity.”

“It’s had an impact on both sides. I’ve also been able to thank people who are helping me out. It’s nice to be able to give things to people and time credits have enabled me to do that. I’m giving my family show tickets booked with time credits for Christmas, and without that I wouldn’t have been able to give them anything...I’m going to take my son to watch a football match – I remember doing the same thing with my dad at about that age”.

Celia and Beth, West Norfolk

Celia and Beth have been best friends for over 19 years. Celia has been earning Time Credits by helping to run the community coffee bar and also with the Norfolk Credit Union, and has been using them to take friends and family on trips to the theatre and days out. Having Time Credits has meant that Celia can do things like surprise her friend with tickets to see ‘Joseph’ at the Corn Exchange which she loved! “It’s given us more freedom, as we would not have the money to do half the things we get to”

The best experience they have had of using Celia’s Time Credits so far was when they attended our trip to London last month with Beth stating that she will be “eternally grateful for because not only was it a great day out, but it was also wonderful to meet so many of the other members that have earned them!”

“Half the places, I wouldn’t be able to go to because I wouldn’t feel like I would want to go on my own, so sharing them means that I get to go”. For Beth, Time Credits are definitely a good idea as she’s getting to spend more time with someone who makes a huge difference in her life “I don’t know what I’d do without her, at a time of need she is always there. She’s a friend in a million”
Unity House, Wiltshire

Unity House is a hostel that supports individuals who have been street homeless often with complex needs and mental health issues. There are usually about 15 Unity House residents, who stay for a period of 6-8 months and receive support, including a ‘Moving On’ programme, while they get back on their feet. One resident, Jamie, started earning by helping with cleaning and maintenance of communal areas, and has also become involved in communal cooking. Jamie has been spending his time credits mainly on his children, taking them out to do activities.

“Time credits have meant that...[Jamie] can now take his children swimming and pay for them. Being a worthwhile dad is a massive thing for him and changed how he feels his children perceive him.”

Unity House have integrated time credits into the service in several ways. One of these is through the Moving On programme for residents. Residents can earn time credits by helping to maintain communal areas of the hostel, which helps them prepare for sustaining tenancies, and supporting new residents when they arrive, encouraging the formation of peer relationships.

Time Credits have also been tied into the support agreements for residents, which focus on weekly goals dependant on their individual situation. Many of the residents have been keen to access the gym and couldn’t afford to go before but can now use time credits.

Cotswold Supported Housing, Lancashire

Cotswold Supported Housing in Chorley provides temporary accommodation for homeless individuals and families. 24 members at Cotswold Supported Housing are earning time credits for a wide range of activities such as taking part in staff interviews, organising and delivering a Halloween Party for other residents, attending weekly resident meetings and carrying out health and safety checks. Residents are taking a more active role within the service, with more people getting involved in resident consultation meetings, planning social activities, cooking, gardening and cleaning communal areas.

“It’s created more of a buzz and excitement amongst residents and there’s been an increase in resident participation.” Catherine Parsons, Life Skills Co-ordinator

“I’ve only just signed up to time credits and have just used my first credit to look round Astley Hall. I look forward to engaging in the future more.” Resident

“The shared experience and memory of the trip has helped them to form friendships and support networks between residents” Social worker
Arts Partnership, Lancashire

The Arts Partnership is a community organisation set up to get more local people in Chorley involved in the arts. They run a range of dance, drama and music classes for people of all ages and abilities and wanted to use time credits to encourage more of their service users to take a more active role at the centre. They also liked the idea of thanking volunteers for giving their time.

The Arts Partnership started using Time Credits in August 2012 and people are now becoming actively involved in the upkeep and maintenance of the centre, as well as leading and supporting a range of classes and groups. By December, 13 members had earned 195 time credits, for activities including running the ‘Music, Arts, Drama and Dance’ group attended by 26 adults with learning disabilities, administration and helping run Big Band nights – at which 6 time credits have been spent by members of the local community.

The Arts Partnership have found that time credits have “become a very positive medium for confidence building” for their participants, and volunteers have felt more valued. One volunteer notes, “You feel appreciated; it means that the couple of hours you’ve given up of your time, it’s meant something to somebody.” Time Credits have also helped the Arts Partnership run activities, particularly a youth group attended by 42 young people, some of whom have drug and alcohol issues and others who have Aspergers syndrome or autism. 8 young people who used to attend the group now play an active role in running it, earning time credits and enabling the group to continue without extra staffing requirements.

Time Credits have also changed the way that service users view their involvement at the Arts Partnership and their contributions, as the centre manager describes; “A lot of them [service users] don’t consider themselves volunteers. They don’t realise a lot of the time that they’re doing something, so when they get something back...it’s quite inspirational for them. I have done something, and I am worthwhile.”
Community Coffee Bar, West Norfolk

West Norfolk Voluntary Community Action (WNVCA) set up a community coffee bar with the support of three local charities: Forward Day Centre, The Purfleet Trust and CSV Vocal West Norfolk to address a lack of volunteering opportunities for service users in King’s Lynn.

“Some vulnerable people in our society do not think they have the necessary skills to be a volunteer. Nor do they know how to access opportunities and what benefits volunteering can bring to them and so this project brings volunteering opportunities directly into the paths of the clients who access the services of our partner organisations” – Marie Connell, WNVCA

Each week 25 volunteers and their support workers give time to the coffee bar, carrying out tasks such as making drinks. They have been spending their credits on a range of activities in the community, including leisure and sports activities and trips with family members. All three charities have reported improved confidence and communication skills among the volunteers, and that they feel part of the community.

Meanwhile the positive impact of being able to access new activities has also been welcomed by the volunteers, with one previously homeless volunteer stating “Being unemployed I probably couldn’t afford to do any fitness training at the gym and so they [Time Credits] will be a great help.”

Community Mothers, Cardiff

Cheryl Hughes first became involved with the Ely Time Credits project by taking part in local community cleanup activities, where she got her whole family involved to earn for an upcoming trip.

Taking part in these activities helped Cheryl grow in confidence, build new relationships and get to know new people locally. As a result she then expressed an interest in forming a new community group aimed at local mothers. Her group, ‘Community Mothers’, is now fully constituted and has received its first funding.

“I feel that time credits have taken me places that I haven’t seen before. They have opened my eyes to more than looking after my children, of course which I love doing. I never thought I would be able to do anything else because of my dyslexia. It has helped me to gain confidence in myself and improve the way I now live my life.

“Community Mothers started off as a small idea that is now growing into something I feel that can help mothers like myself gain confidence in themselves to do whatever they want to. And to think all this started by litter picking and having fun with other like minded communities.” Cheryl

Community Development and Social Care
Chorley Peer Support Recovery Group, Lancashire

Chorley Peer Support Recover Group (CPSRG) is a peer support group for people who have experienced mental health problems and are at a stage in their recovery journey where they are becoming independent from formal services. The group meets each week talk through their week’s highs and lows and sharing advice and experiences to support one another.

CPSRG felt Time Credits would help users feel valued for the contributions they make to other people’s wellbeing, and offer them spending opportunities that support their recovery journey. The group is independent, and the responsibility of planning and running the group tended to fall on one or two members. People are now earning Time Credits for attending the group and providing peer support to others, but also for planning and facilitating sessions. This has led to an increase in regular attendance and the group has grown so it has now had to split into two smaller groups. As one member said, “Time Credits has helped the group become stronger, it’s much less fragmented now”.

Time Credits have offered members the chance to try activities they had never done before – as one member said, “I can do things that I wouldn’t be able to do because I can’t afford them otherwise”. This has included going to the theatre and other social and physical activities, which are very positive for recovery. They are also doing activities with other people, including others from the group but particularly family members. For example, one member took his sister and niece to Chorley Carnival using Time Credits.

Finger on the Pulse, Wiltshire

Finger on the Pulse is a mental health peer support group run as part of Wiltshire Housing’s tenancy support provision. The group has been running for two years and Wiltshire Council staff are hoping that time credits will have benefits for individuals who participate and may help to encourage service users to run sections of the group and to take ownership. Time Credits have been introduced to the group as a way to strengthen the group and motivate members to do activities in the local area such as go to local leisure centres or arts venues.

“The Time Credits initiative has really fired up some very vulnerable and, at times, isolated individuals to give something of themselves to others. Very positive reception from FOTP members and I think it’s excellent and very motivating.”

To hear more about Wiltshire Time Credits search for Wiltshire Time Credits on You Tube
Tackling social determinants of health and wellbeing

Individuals are at the heart of every community and empowered individuals are the key to taking action on health inequalities. Spice Time Credits have a strong track record of engaging people who have not previously contributed – in current programmes between 20 and 60% of participants have not given time previously – driving up rates of active and ongoing participation across communities and within services of all types.

Social capital

Earning and spending time credits have positive outcomes for individuals especially on improved self-belief, confidence and a sense of personal agency. Working at a local level Time Credits are a powerful tool for activating people to contribute to the local area, take part in new activities, engage with other people and think differently about their role in improving their lives and those of the wider community.

Service design and delivery

Time Credits enable individuals to engage with organisations and agencies in new ways, breaking down structural barriers to participation. The result is services and agencies that are better placed to make positive health interventions in partnership with local people.

The Spice Time Credit model has been designed to work with and between local government, commissioners, providers and communities. New networks develop across these sectors, expertise areas and funding/procurement streams.

“We are delighted to be involved in Time Credits. Our aim is to increase the number of people coming through the door and taking part in physical activity. Therefore any opportunity to engage and promote this is really important for us.” Gillian Wright, Wiltshire Council Leisure

Public health and sustainable communities

We are collaborating across England with supporting communities to engage with public health issues. For example, we are working with Public Health Wiltshire to explore ways to support public health outcomes in Wiltshire, which in practice will mean working across health and social care, transport, education, waste management, voluntary sector, arts and heritage, libraries and with local neighbourhood groups. This approach means that individuals are linked to a whole range of agencies, and able to play a greater role in influencing decisions and working in partnership and setting priorities.

“The empowerment of individuals and communities [is] at the centre of action to reduce health inequalities”

_The Marmot Review, 2010_