



THE CROWN COMMUNITY

Revitalising Bridlington through collaborative co-location

A Case Study in community innovation and partnership
October 2025

INTRODUCTION



This case study explores the impact of the Crown Community, Bridlington, a multi organisational community supporting residents of Bridlington to live well.

While the East Riding of Yorkshire is often recognised for its generally positive health outcomes, there are notable areas where deprivation persists, most significantly in Bridlington. In response, a bold partnership approach has been adopted to transform local infrastructure and assets, aiming to enhance both access to and the experience of health and care services in the town. At the heart of this initiative is the Crown Buildings—once a disused job centre—now reimagined as the dynamic 'Crown Community', a co-located hub for public, private, and voluntary sector (VCSE) organisations.

BACKGROUND

The Crown Buildings were vacated by the Department for Work and Pensions during the Covid-19 pandemic, leaving the three-storey property empty and deteriorating. A bold vision emerged to revitalise the property, transforming it into a central community asset that brings together a variety of services under one roof, creating a holistic and accessible support system for all residents.

“We wanted to create a one stop shop. Somebody would come to the front door for a food parcel or something like that and there would be other advice and support available. It’s that holistic approach.”



Since 2021, East Riding of Yorkshire Council has leased the Crown Buildings to the HEY Smile Foundation, which in turn sub-leases space to a diverse mix of organisations. Tenants include The Hinge Centre (providing a social supermarket, food bank, and community support), House of Light, Carers Plus, Together Women, counselling and physiotherapy services, the Primary Care Network (PCN), and Yorkshire in Business. The building’s central location, proximity to the GP surgery, and flexible spaces have made it an ideal venue for both established and outreach services.

KEY BENEFITS

- **Co-location:** Organisations being located in the same building has supported quick and easy referrals to partners.

"Having these services and organisations in the same building is like gold dust. We've developed relationships and collaborate to improve outcomes for people and families in the local community and wider out with patients"

"I was able to refer a patient who is needing safeguarding for financial abuse straight into the Hinge to support with money management"

- **Central Location:** The site's position in the town centre, next to the GP surgery, has enabled the social prescribing team to expand while staying connected to core health services, the job centre, and the Council Customer Service Centre.
- **Flexible Facilities:** Crown Community offers a variety of rooms and spaces of different sizes, with features such work pods, pram storage and multiple entrances. This flexible space accommodates a wide range of activities and organisations.
- **Collaborative Opportunities:** Organisations now plan and schedule activities in a coordinated way, allowing residents to access multiple forms of support in a single visit. For instance, carers support is provided during Café Neuro sessions.

"I no longer require mental health support as I've realised the problem was not depression or stress, but loneliness, isolation and guilt because of the pressure within my caring role, this has reduced massively now I have the support of you and other carers within the groups and have now gained confidence within my caring role"



Space available for hire at the Crown Community

**Left: Work pods
Right: Main Activity Space**



KEY BENEFITS

- **Shared Costs:** Utility bills and insurance are collectively covered, reducing the financial burden for smaller VCSE groups, which also benefit from reduced rent.
- **Training:** Inter-organisational training sessions foster skills sharing and relationship building for tenants of the Crown Community and residents of Bridlington. For example, people attending House of Light have accessed parent first aid courses through The Hinge.
- **Community Input:** People using Crown Community services share their experiences to help shape future developments, such as research into cardiovascular disease in coastal communities.
- **Accessibility:** The building has a disabled access ramp and adapted toilets, though accessibility to upper floors remains limited.
- **Security:** Having a security company as a tenant provides flexible building access and additional security.

Collectively, the Crown Community serves as a unifying force for the local VCSE sector, using events like The Hinge's Community Conversations to extend its reach and share best practice.



IMPACT

Activities and Reach

Over an 11-month period, Crown Community organisations delivered a wide range of services, including:

- 332 adult group sessions (e.g., men's meet and eat, craft for health, healthy minds, drop-ins)
- 127 children's after school sessions and 8 holiday clubs
- 69 food store and 'Waste Not Wednesdays' sessions
- 1,404 one-to-one appointments
- Up to four carers groups per month
- 416 social prescribing/MH appointments
- Specialist support for resettlement, benefits, and welfare

The reach of these services is significant, with thousands of attendances recorded for group sessions, food support, and guidance. For example, The Hinge alone supported 2,563 individuals over the report period, distributed 689 food parcels, and facilitated 389 attendances at carers groups. Other successes include the Home from Hospital service from Carers Plus and health awareness events attended by over 160 people.



Activity spaces at The Hinge, clockwise from top right, Main Activity Space, Digital Hub, Kitchen Activity Space

CHALLENGES

- The instability caused by short term leases and building refurbishment needs mean that organisations have an uncertain future and cannot plan for their long-term growth and ambitions. Tenants are prepared to invest in the building if longer-term security is provided.

“ We could use our reserves to improve the building if we had a long term lease, but because we don’t have that we need to save the reserve for if we need to find another space”

“We’re not prepared to invest in having wifi installed if the building doesn’t have a future”

- The building was originally designed for a different purpose and tenants face challenges with the internal layout not fully meeting their requirements.

“Potential is limited because of the building”

- Maintaining a balance between operational running costs and ensuring that rent remains affordable for VCSE organisations is challenging. Further funding is required for substantial repairs and improvements to the building, such as the heating system which requires upgrading, but the Crown Community is not generating enough of a surplus to be reinvested in major improvements.

Although the Crown Community face challenges with the building, the organisations involved have shown resilience and flexibility by adapting to the space to prove what co-location in this space can achieve. With additional funding to adapt the building the Crown Community could deliver even more for the community of Bridlington.

OPPORTUNITIES

Building on its achievements, the Crown Community is well-positioned to embrace new opportunities and further strengthen its impact:

- **Funding and Lease Potential:** While current funding and lease arrangements are short-term, they have enabled rapid progress and innovation. Securing longer-term support will unlock even greater possibilities for building improvements and future planning, making the centre eligible for major grants such as the National Lottery, which require a three-year tenancy.
- **Expanding Shared Resources:** Additional to the part-time centre coordinator role, introducing roles such as receptionists and navigators could enhance collaboration, further supporting the vibrant mix of organisations within the building.
- **Maximising Space and Facilities:** The top floor of the Crown Community is currently out of use with major work required to reconnect utilities. Investing in this would allow space for more tenants and activities to take place. Upgrades such as a lift and improved car park lighting, would make the centre safer and more accessible for everyone.
- **Unlocking Broader Funding:** The centre has successfully extended initiatives like the 'Warm Welcome' pilot, demonstrating its ability to adapt and grow. With more flexible funding, the Crown Community can expand its preventative and general community activities, ensuring continued support for residents.
- **Strengthening Awareness and Identity:** As the centre evolves, there is a fantastic opportunity to enhance its visibility and branding. By developing a unified timetable and clearer identity, more Bridlington residents will discover the full range of services available beyond the well-known food bank.
- **Expanded opening hours:** More groups and activities available to the community on evenings and weekends.

FUTURE VISION

Starting with the transformation of Crown Buildings we intend to transform the Quay Road triangle into a 'Live Well Campus', creating a neighbourhood health engine to support Bridlington's residents to improve their life chances.



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