



grounded.

Impact report
Jan 2024 - Apr 2026



Welcome, to grounded.

grounded. is a community-led wellbeing café built on the belief that mental health support should be accessible, welcoming, and stigma-free. Each **grounded.** site offers a unique blend of mental health services, wellbeing activities, and a warm café environment, where people can connect, unwind, and access support in a way that feels natural and non-clinical.

Our mission is to bridge the gap between community and care, creating spaces that nurture connection, creativity, and confidence. Since launching, grounded. has seen incredible engagement across all sites - demonstrating the growing need for spaces that combine social connection with mental health support.

Each site offers:

- Comfortable café space with drinks and snacks
- Peer support and informal wellbeing activities
- Referrals and links to therapeutic support
- Evening crisis support via Birmingham Mind's Talking Spaces service



Our locations

In the heart of our communities



Selly Oak

- 250+ visitors monthly
- Young people accessing support close to educational institutes
- Student outlet for Wellbeing support
- Strong partnerships with local GPs and healthcare pathways

"I finally had somewhere I could talk between lectures."

Hall Green

- Growing monthly footfall from families and local residents
- Consistent demand for informal mental health conversations and early-help support
- Regular group sessions and community events supporting connection and reducing isolation
- Strong neighbourhood engagement with high recommendations

"It feels like a safe place to come when things get overwhelming. I don't feel alone anymore."





St. Pauls

- 40% increase in footfall year-on-year
- Strong engagement from business and young workers
- Dedicated space for training and employment pathways/ retreats and wellbeing

“grounded. helped me build confidence and take my first steps into work.”



Our vision

grounded. is more than a café - it's a movement towards normalising mental health conversations, reducing isolation, and building resilient communities. As we continue to grow, our focus remains the same: creating spaces where everyone feels welcome, supported, and grounded.



Key partnerships

A partnership model for community mental health

grounded. brings together the strengths of Living Well UK, Birmingham Mind, and Evolve to deliver accessible, preventative mental health support in the heart of Birmingham communities.

By combining clinical expertise, community insight, and social value delivery, grounded. creates a trusted space where people can access support early - helping prevent issues from escalating and strengthening community wellbeing.



Real impact, delivered locally

Through this partnership we provide:



Accessible therapeutic mental health support.



Early intervention and prevention programmes.



Skills, confidence and employment pathways for young people.



A welcoming, stigma-free community hub.

This collaborative model is efficient, scalable, and already demonstrating measurable social impact.

Backing a model that changes lives early

Social impact

Deliver **credible, measurable** social value.

Community wellbeing

Invest in **healthier communities** and resilient workforces.

Inclusive growth

Support **skills, confidence** and opportunities for all.

Proven model

Back a **scalable early-intervention model** that is already delivering results.



Why mental health matters

A region under pressure

The West Midlands is one of the UK's most economically significant regions - and one of its most stretched. Businesses across Birmingham and Solihull are navigating a landscape defined by rising recruitment costs, high absence rates, declining productivity, and a workforce increasingly disengaged from the organisations they work for. At the root of much of this is a mental health crisis that is quietly costing the region millions every year.

This isn't a peripheral issue. It is a structural one.

Research specifically tracking Midlands firms found that the proportion of businesses experiencing long-term mental health absence - defined as lasting four weeks or more - grew from 38% in 2023 to 47% in 2024. That is nearly half of all businesses in the region dealing with extended mental health-related absence in a single year. The same research found that firms experiencing workplace mental health issues such as absence and presenteeism could see their productivity drop by as much as 25%.

The financial consequences are significant. Across the UK, presenteeism costs employers around £28 billion annually, staff turnover linked to poor mental health costs £22 billion, and absenteeism a further £6 billion. 61% of UK employees who left a job in the last year - or plan to leave in the next 12 months - cited poor mental health as a factor. For businesses already facing pressure on margins, these are costs that compound quietly and consistently.



The answer is not simply more clinical provision. Waiting lists remain long, access remains uneven, and traditional services are not always where people need them to be. What communities need - and what the evidence increasingly supports - is early intervention. Support that reaches people before they reach crisis point. Spaces where it is easy, not intimidating, to ask for help.

That is exactly what grounded. provides.

For every £1 invested in supporting employee mental health, employers receive on average £4.70 back in improved productivity - and the return is highest when that investment is focused on early intervention. grounded. is precisely that: a proven, community-rooted model that catches people early, reduces isolation, builds resilience, and keeps people connected to support before situations escalate.

For businesses in Birmingham and Solihull, investing in grounded. is not charity. It is infrastructure. It is a direct investment in the stability and productivity of the regional workforce - and in the communities those businesses depend on.



370%

For every £1 invested in supporting employee mental health, employers receive on average £4.70 back in improved productivity.

Our story so far

grounded. began with a simple but powerful idea:
that mental health support should be more accessible,
more human, and rooted in community.

Since 2024, we have supported

1,866



walk-in appointments

In July 2023, our first space opened in Selly Oak, Birmingham - marking the beginning of a new approach to wellbeing support.

Developed in partnership with the Living Well Consortium and Birmingham Mind, grounded. Selly Oak was created as a welcoming, inclusive environment where people can connect, take part in activities, and access support in a space that feels safe and familiar.





Since 2024, we have supported

1,442



clinical referrals

From the outset, the response from the community was strong. grounded. quickly became more than just a café - it became a hub where people could spend time, build relationships, and take positive steps towards improving their wellbeing. Alongside informal opportunities to connect, individuals are also able to access structured support through a formal referral process, ensuring people receive the right help in a safe and appropriate way.

In its first year, the Selly Oak site welcomed thousands of visitors and delivered a wide range of wellbeing sessions, workshops, and activities designed to reduce isolation and improve mental health. The space has supported people at different stages of their wellbeing journey - from those looking for connection, to those accessing more targeted support. It has also created opportunities for local people through volunteering and employment pathways, helping individuals build confidence, skills, and a renewed sense of purpose.



Since 2024, we have served almost



30,000

customers in our cafés

The success of Selly Oak demonstrated a clear and growing need for this type of community-based wellbeing model. In response, grounded. expanded - opening two further sites in Hall Green and St Pauls, extending its reach into new communities across Birmingham.

grounded. Hall Green has built on the original model, becoming a vital local space where residents can access both social connection and structured support. The site has strengthened partnerships with local organisations and continues to see strong engagement from individuals seeking a safe, welcoming environment alongside access to formal wellbeing services.

Similarly, grounded. St Pauls has established itself as a key hub within the community - supporting a diverse range of individuals and offering a consistent programme of workshops, wellbeing activities, and referral-based services. Its location has enabled grounded. to reach new audiences, particularly those who may face additional barriers to accessing traditional support.

Together, these three sites represent the growth of grounded. from a single pilot into a small but impactful network of community wellbeing spaces. Each location remains rooted in the same core mission: to provide accessible, meaningful support while fostering connection and reducing stigma around mental health.

We have hosted

439



wellbeing workshops

2,367



workshop attendees

Our story so far is one of listening, learning, and responding to community need. From Selly Oak to Hall Green and St Pauls, grounded. continues to grow - not just in size, but in impact - creating spaces where people feel they belong, and where support is both accessible and effective.



“

*grounded. helped me build confidence
and take my first steps into work.*

”





grounded.

P Pay here
at machine
Display ticket

grounded.

Entrance the way

55

Journey of change

When Sarah (name changed) first walked into grounded. in Selly Oak, she wasn't looking for therapy. She just needed somewhere quiet to sit.

A university student living away from home for the first time, Sarah had been struggling with anxiety and loneliness. The pressures of study, finances and being away from family had slowly built up, and she found herself feeling overwhelmed.

Like many young people, Sarah didn't know where to turn. Traditional services felt intimidating, and long waiting lists made it difficult to access support quickly.

That changed when she discovered grounded.

grounded. is a community wellbeing café created in partnership with organisations including Birmingham Mind and the Living Well Consortium, designed to make mental health support more accessible in everyday community spaces. Visitors can simply drop in for a coffee, attend wellbeing workshops, or access therapeutic support in a welcoming, non-clinical environment.

At first, Sarah just ordered a coffee and sat quietly. But over time, she began speaking to staff and attending a wellbeing workshop hosted at the venue. Eventually she learned about Talking Spaces, an evening drop-in service offering free face-to-face mental health support for anyone feeling distressed or in crisis.

Having this support available in a relaxed setting made it easier for Sarah to open up.

"I didn't feel like I was going somewhere clinical. It just felt like a safe place where someone would listen."

Through conversations with trained staff and signposting to further support, Sarah began to build confidence and develop coping strategies. She now regularly attends wellbeing activities and says grounded. helped her seek help earlier - before reaching crisis point.

Sarah's story reflects the purpose behind grounded: to create accessible spaces where people can seek support early, connect with others, and improve their mental wellbeing before problems escalate.

For many people like Sarah, it starts with something simple: a cup of coffee, a safe space, and someone ready to listen.



Community-focused retail

Collected. is a curated, community-focused retail space that showcases the work of local makers across Birmingham.



It was created to provide independent creators with a platform to sell their products while connecting with a wider community in a meaningful way.

The makers featured at Collected. represent a diverse range of creative disciplines - from art prints, and jewellery to wellness products and sustainable goods. Many makers face common challenges: limited exposure, difficulty accessing affordable retail spaces, and the need to reach audiences that value locally crafted, conscious products.

By offering space within community hubs like grounded. cafés, Collected. allows makers to display their work in a high-footfall, welcoming environment. Visitors not only shop for unique, handcrafted items, but also experience the social and wellbeing ethos of the spaces, creating a sense of connection and shared purpose.

“

Collected. gives our makers a space to be seen, to connect with customers, and to feel part of a supportive local creative community.

”

The impact of Collected. extends beyond retail:

- Empowering local makers by giving them access to professional, visible, and supportive selling spaces.
- Strengthening community engagement by linking shopping with social connection and wellbeing.
- Promoting conscious consumerism, where each purchase supports independent creators and reinvests in positive social impact.

Through rotating features and regular community events, Collected. ensures a dynamic showcase of Birmingham's creative talent, fostering collaboration, growth, and sustainable creative careers. This model helps makers thrive while supporting the wider mission of building inclusive, creative, and resilient communities.

Makers within our Collected project within grounded said “Promoting wellbeing, encouraging local people to support their creative communities and allowing people to experience light, colour and creativity in their everyday, speaks to the heart of what Hargest Creative are all about. Mayuri and Kevin Hargest are artists and wellbeing specialists and are delighted to have some of their original paintings, watercolours, greeting cards, framed prints and their Birmingham Hospice charity linocut, Liberty as part of Collected in grounded.” Another maker said “A little warmth and grace goes a long way”.

A safe space

I was initially signposted to grounded. by my GP while I was waiting to access talking therapies.

At that point, I knew I needed support but felt stuck in the gap between being referred and actually receiving help. When I first walked into grounded., I was struck by how calm and welcoming it felt - it didn't feel like a service, just a safe space to be. While waiting for therapy to begin, I decided to join a wellbeing session, which gave me something positive to focus on each week. It helped me manage my anxiety and feel less alone during what can be a difficult waiting period.

Being able to access support in a more informal way made a real difference. grounded. became more than just somewhere I'd been referred to - it became part of my routine and recovery, helping me stay connected and supported until my therapy started.





“

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”

Out of hours talking spaces support with Birmingham Mind

Support sessions provide a safe, informal space to talk openly about mental health, share experiences, and connect with others - without judgement. By being hosted in the relaxed, accessible environment of grounded., barriers to support are reduced, helping people seek help earlier.

1,168
people to date have attended
Talking Spaces at grounded.





Get in touch

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