

## Notes from Community Wellbeing and Inclusion Workshop

Meeting - 14<sup>th</sup> April 2026

### Present

Chair – Marie Gould (CO NDVS)

Bev Triggs, Simone Thompson, Becky Brady, Sarah Milton, James Lander, Louise Flagg, Adam Crispin, Megan Sanders, Adrian Avery and Tom Mack (virtual)

### Apologies

Charmain Lovett Jess Foy

### Relevant Links

**Community Life Survey and Volunteering Initiatives:** Marie led an update discussion on the development and deployment of the Community Life Survey, including the proposal of integration of volunteering questions and strategies to address loneliness and social isolation. LF asked if the Community Developer place-based themes could also be included and public community opinion sought. MG also discussed logos. ***MG working with BT and JB (NDVS Events an PR Officer) would proceed to finalise the survey on NDC engagement tool - “Let’s Talk” and send link to members prior to going live. Members to send over thoughts and once live support the completion within their personal and professional communities.***

**Survey Design and National Comparison:** MG explained that the Community Life Survey is being aligned with the national framework, aiming to provide baseline data comparable to the national survey. The group agreed to keep the survey concise for initial deployment, focusing on key themes such as belonging and social isolation, and to distribute it electronically and through community developers to maximise uptake in North Devon and Torridge. It is not as in-depth as the national survey, but more relevant for local context. Also as using the Community Spirit Level model – there is comparison for this simplified version.

**Inclusion of Volunteering Questions:** The team identified a significant section on volunteering in the national survey and decided to incorporate relevant questions into their own survey. These include whether respondents have volunteered, considered volunteering, or are aware of Devon Connect, with the intention of using volunteering as a potential intervention for loneliness and social isolation.

**Micro-Volunteering and Befriending Models:** MG described successful local models such as Live Well in Braunton, where socially isolated individuals are offered opportunities to become trained volunteers and befriend others, often through micro-volunteering activities

like gardening or shopping assistance. This approach is supported by collaboration with wellbeing teams and social prescribers.

**Referral Data and Target Populations:** The group discussed data from GP practice referrals to wellbeing teams, highlighting that loneliness, isolation, low mood, and anxiety are the most common needs for some practices. Referrals span a wide age range, and the team is piloting a befriending programme with Torridge PCN, aiming to connect isolated individuals with volunteers and reintegrate them into community activities. *BB and SM to submit previous months referral stats for analysis and to do this at each workshop. ST to see if we can invite representation from Torridge PCN*

**Survey Distribution and Feedback Process:** Plans were made to preview the survey link with stakeholders before launch, set a feedback deadline, and encourage broad distribution through professional and community networks. The group also considered supplementing the survey with focus groups and alternative engagement methods to ensure comprehensive community input.

**Evaluation, Case Studies, and Social Value Measurement:** AA, JL and other participants discussed the importance of combining quantitative data with qualitative case studies to demonstrate social value, inform funding decisions, and meet reporting requirements for the National Lottery and other stakeholders.

**Role of Case Studies:** The group emphasised that case studies provide meaningful, human-centred evidence of impact, complementing statistical data. These narratives are valued by funders and grant applications and help to humanise the outcomes of community initiatives.

**Infographics and Data Reporting:** MG described the use of short, snappy infographics to present key statistics, such as the number of events and participants, alongside more detailed annual reports. This dual approach caters to different audiences, from those seeking quick insights to those requiring in-depth analysis.

**Challenges in Social Value Measurement:** Participants discussed the limitations of proxy measures and the need to ensure that reported figures are meaningful to stakeholders. There was consensus that qualitative insights and stakeholder feedback are essential for capturing the true impact of community work.

**Collaborative Evaluation Approaches:** The team considered holding a future workshop to define what should be measured, involving both internal and external stakeholders. They also discussed the potential for ripple mapping exercises and broader participation in evaluation activities to enrich the evidence base. *MG to schedule future workshop to cover this in conjunction with JL*

**Devon Connect and Digital Directory Integration:** TM, MG and LF and others explored the challenges and opportunities of integrating Devon Connect and the Joy app as central

directories for community services, aiming to avoid duplication and improve accessibility for both professionals and the public.

**Directory Duplication and Integration:** the issue of multiple directories being created independently was issued, leading to duplication of effort. The group agreed on the need to consolidate resources by building on existing platforms like Devon Connect and Joy, rather than creating new ones.

**User Experience and Thematic Pages:** Efforts are underway to make directories more user-friendly and relevant, including the development of themed landing pages (e.g., for youth activities) and campaigns that allow organisations to tag their services for easier discovery.

**Feedback and Continuous Improvement:** The group discussed the importance of gathering feedback from users, including social prescribers and young people, to refine the directory's functionality. Initiatives such as producing guides for organisations and enabling automatic updates between platforms were mentioned.

**Sustainability and Funding:** There was recognition that maintaining and administering these digital platforms requires ongoing funding, not just for the technology but also for the staff who manage and update the content.

**Neighbourhood Health Framework and Service Mapping:** ST presented work on aligning local community services with the national Neighbourhood Health Framework, focusing on mapping existing assets, identifying gaps, and preparing for potential commissioning opportunities as priorities shift towards community-based care.

**Links: Neighbourhood Framework: link**  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/neighbourhood-health-framework/neighbourhood-health-framework>

**Government Guidance for Neighbourhoods (rapid one pager) [Government guidance for Neighbourhoods](#)**

**Framework Alignment and Mapping:** ST outlined the task of mapping local VCSE (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise) services against the NHS England Neighbourhood Health Framework, ensuring that community assets and priorities are clearly identified and aligned with national and local objectives.

**Service Gaps and Capacity Building:** The mapping exercise revealed significant gaps in services for certain populations, such as older people in Torridge, and highlighted the need to build capacity and sustainability in volunteer-led and community-based services to meet future commissioning requirements.

**Funding and Sustainability Concerns:** Participants discussed the precarious nature of funding for many community services, noting that reliance on volunteers and short-term

grants poses risks to sustainability. The group stressed the importance of distinguishing between funded and unfunded services in the mapping process.

**Integration of Multiple Priorities:** The team acknowledged the complexity of aligning NHS, local government, and community priorities, and the need for a unified approach to avoid duplication and ensure that resources are directed towards the most pressing needs.

**Strategic Group Objectives and Communication Structures:** JL led the group in a review of the CW&I Group's strategic objectives, focusing on the 'four S's' (Support, Share, Shape, Strengthen), and discussed the need for improved communication, data sharing, and feedback mechanisms between local communities, the group, and system-level partners.

**Four S's Framework:** The group reaffirmed their commitment to the four S's: supporting communities to deliver objectives, sharing local insights, shaping system-level recommendations, and strengthening two-way communication between communities and decision-makers.

**Data Sharing and Feedback Loops:** Participants identified challenges in data sharing due to privacy and technical barriers, and discussed the need for structured processes to ensure that community feedback informs strategic decisions and that responses are communicated back to local groups.

**Membership and Capacity Issues:** The group recognised the value of diverse experience among members but noted limitations due to lack of dedicated resources, absence of key stakeholders (such as ICB members), and the voluntary nature of participation.

**Proposals for Improved Information Flow:** Suggestions included using simple digital tools like Microsoft Forms for quarterly data collection, clarifying the roles of intermediary groups, and ensuring that local priorities are effectively represented at higher levels.

**Opportunities, Threats, and Group Reflection:** In a structured reflection session, participants identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) for the group, highlighting the need for collaboration, adaptability, and clear communication in a rapidly changing environment.

**SWOT Analysis Outcomes:** The group identified experienced membership and strong partnerships as key strengths, while capacity constraints, lack of resources, and shifting priorities were seen as major weaknesses and threats. Opportunities included leveraging neighbourhood health initiatives and improving collaborative working.

**Action Points and Next Steps:** Plans were made to continue the reflection in future workshops, incorporate the VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity) framework as a guiding principle, and explore new ways to align day-to-day work with group objectives.

**Please see appendix two – JL notes from the SWOT activity around aims and objectives.**

## **Follow-up tasks**

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**Community Life Survey Distribution and Feedback:** Share the preview link to the Community Life Survey with all members, collect feedback by the specified deadline, and ensure the survey is promoted within members' communities and professional networks to maximise response rates. (MG BT)

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**Community Life Survey Question Review:** Review and provide comments on the volunteering questions for the Community Life Survey before it goes live. (All members)

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**Community Priorities Engagement:** Engage community developers to re-engage around previously set priorities using alternative engagement methods (e.g., Wellbeing Café, focus groups), and consider incorporating feedback on the seven Northern Devon themes. (LF Community Developers)

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**Standardisation of Local Research:** Develop a fairly standardised version of local research questions for community developers to use when checking the relevance of local priorities, ensuring consistency across communities. (LF JL)

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**Community Spirit Level Model Refresh:** Refresh the community spirit level model and share the updated assessment with the group for use in ongoing and future work. (LF)

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**Case Study and Data Collection for Evaluation:** Gather and submit case studies and relevant statistics from all community developers, ensuring both qualitative and quantitative data are included for the upcoming evaluation and reporting. (All Community Developers)

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**Directory and Platform Feedback:** Provide feedback on the use and improvement of Devon Connect and Joy platforms, including suggestions for thematic pages, campaign tagging, and user experience enhancements. (All members)

**Beyond this, reading the links below are also useful.**

**First is the link to the medium-term planning framework: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/medium-term-planning-framework-delivering-change-together-2026-27-to-2028-29.pdf>**