

Appendix 1

Next Steps Update: Building Community Infrastructure to improve the health and well being of Communities and Residents on Wirral

Context

Every resident is unique, as also is the environment and the community in which they live.

All individuals, their families, and their communities from time to time need help, some most of the time and some only rarely.

This help is provided through government and its agencies at national, regional, and local level. It is however, increasingly recognised that help from within the community, if structured and readily available, is of considerable value.

It is also known that help within the community, because of its proximity, knowledge and sensitivity, can forestall a worsening of the need and a much speedier response to it. This help can be fully developed through Community Hubs and Family Hubs.

The health of a community, but not of individuals within a community is often determined by the average life expectancy and average healthy life expectancy of its residents.

An unacceptable and growing difference in these measures is found between 'well off' communities and deprived communities. To address this difference government has committed to a levelling up programme and has brought forward a new Health and Care Bill with the specific aim of reducing health inequalities, see below.

In Wirral there are a several deprived communities where the level of life expectancy and healthy life expectancy is unacceptably low.

What is Local Community Infrastructure?

Current systems to deal with Individual, family and community needs, and the effectiveness of structures to ensure collective need is met, were put to the severest test by the Covid pandemic.

In response to the virus communities and their residents using their local knowledge, came together and looked after each other with the support of the health sector, government at all levels, the CVSE sector, and many other partners.

It is widely accepted that local knowledge minimised the impact of the virus and continues to do so.

The virus has also shone a strong light on the lack of knowledge at the most local level held by local authorities and health providers, a deficit which, unless addressed, is likely to continue to limit the effective delivery of services to those most in need in more normal circumstances with the impact of the virus minimised.

The Health and Care Bill introduced in July 2022 legislates for communities and their residents and the CVSE sector to fully participate in the design of new systems addressing the limitations of current systems identified by the pandemic. NHS guidance documents also fully emphasise this requirement and more specifically NHS guidance B1762 Working in Partnership with People and communities published on 4th August.

A precis of B1762, prepared by Community Voice, illustrates the case very strongly, almost mandatory, for people and communities to be involved in the full extent of change programmes being developed by ICP's, ICB's the NHS and key partners. Programmes and plans developed in partnership to harness the local knowledge through the provision of simple and effective systems to address need quickly and effectively and through which communities and residents can make their strongest contribution, leads to a discussion of how best this may be developed and brought forward at the local level.

This discussion will be greatly assisted by recent publications from Locality, New local and the Fuller Report, all of which have been added to the list of key publications

The term Local Infrastructure attempts to describe in general terms what needs to be considered alongside the key elements and features associated with successful approaches adopted in England.

It is a collective term for the agreed system approach taken by each community and its residents working in partnership and in codesign in deciding what is appropriate for them.

The challenge of codesign from the community and resident perspective

Implicit in the Health and Care Bill 2022 is the assumption that communities 'know who they are' and are ready to rise to the challenge of contributing to the codesign of a 'place-based' new approach to improving health and wellbeing and which can help address local need.

Two fundamental points for consideration would seem to arise at the outset, have the boundaries of the community been established and accepted and has the willingness of community and residents, to play a key role in improving health and wellbeing, through representation also been established.

For the purposes of local government, here in Wirral and in most local authorities, place is divided into wards. Within each ward individuals are elected to be the ward's representatives in local government. In Wirral this is currently three per ward. The number is subject to review.

The ward boundaries established for local government are, by and large, acceptable for local government and should represent a start point for discussions about 'place' in the context of a codesigned programme relating to improvements in health and wellbeing. There is also potential for these boundaries to be reviewed.

Subsets of community do exist within wards and their identity needs to be understood. Where possible subsets need to be considered.

To be able to play a key role communities and residents will, within each place, need to find a way to ensure health and wellbeing need, for individual residents, for families, for groups of residents and even for the whole community, is recognised, understood. Appreciated, and then addressed.

Next steps

In many cases need can be identified from within the community, as has often been the case with Covid.

Where services need to be involved, then best practice is found in the establishment of link and help organisations, referred to as community hubs and family hubs. A link organisation is able to provide advice, help to coordinates dialogue and support through efficient signposting, assist with the use of digital systems, and in many other ways.

- Establishment of prototype community link organisations.

It is suggested that four communities, one in each constituency, be established for the prototypes, with oversight from the Health and Wellbeing Board.

- A possible phased approach is outlined below
- This approach should be seen as being under constant review by all partners and participants as brought forward from an initial thoughts document which has been accepted by the HWBB

First phase. Establishing commitment and consensus.

Step 1. Submit for approval to the Health and Wellbeing Board on 9th February the Reference Group's proposal for the establishment of community hubs and family hubs as link organisations within Wirral's communities - Completed

Step 2a. Engage with the Leaders of each political party to secure their approval for discussions with Elected Members of each ward and then secure ward EM's support for discussions to begin with each community they represent and the extent to which they wish to participate in the discussions. – Ongoing but limited to the four prototype wards. Other wards wishing to start exploratory discussions will be warmly welcomed. Four wards, one from each political party have been nominated for the approval of the party leaders and are Rock Ferry, conservative ward yet to be nominated, Birkenhead and Tranmere and Eastham

Step 2b. Engage with all key partners providing services to determine their approval, support, and level of involvement in and for discussions with communities within each ward. Meetings have taken place with the Director of Place, the WBC Chair and the PCN Chair.

Further meetings will be arranged as soon as possible to update key personnel of progress to date

Consideration has been given to establishing regular meetings at an appropriate frequency and these will be monthly through 2023. Chairs of key committees and NHS Trusts will be consulted as to their involvement in the next 10 weeks and other key partners on the HWBB. 2 members of the HWBB-CVF Reference Group have been selected to be members of the newly formed Place Partnership Board chaired by the NHS Director of Place. The Reference Group has actively participated in the development of the draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy being developed by the Director of Health as requested by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Step 2c Further meetings have taken place with the Director for Adults' Care and Health and with Nesta Hawker Associate Director for Transformation and Partnerships to discuss how the plan/programme could/should be carried forward with the full involvement of the nine neighbourhoods already well established on Wirral. It is considered that this will be of considerable benefit to the plan/ programme set out below. These meetings will develop the scope, structure and aims of linking in the neighbourhoods to the ongoing programme. It is anticipated that more key partners will join the discussions in due course as discussions progress. Two meetings have taken place and agreement reached to form a Transformation and Partnership Steering Group which will meet monthly. A plan to be brought forward in which it is anticipated that partnership working within neighbourhoods will follow the prototypes being established in the wards mentioned above.

The Reference Group has been strengthened with a number of new members with complementary skills and knowledge, who will introduce themselves to the HWBB in due course.

Step 3. Engage with local organisations, in the prototype communities and with individuals active in supporting the health and wellbeing of each community. Contact and discussions are ongoing with CVF volunteers and local organisations through the Community of Practice and Wirral Council CVF Group meetings who wish to be part of the Reference Group and actively participate in the ongoing work programme.

Step 4. Bring all the interests established above together with the aim of developing a best practice plan appropriate to each prototype community with the specific aim of forming a link organisation.

Step 5. Form a community development team (CDT) from within the prototype community to lead discussions for the community.

Updates from CVF-RG members

Briefing Paper - Green Spaces Group - CVF - Reference Group

The CVF-RG proposal for the establishment of a local environmental Green Space Infrastructure plan to improve the quality of and access to local green spaces in Wirral, was approved at the Wirral Health and Wellbeing Board in February 2022. A multi-agency Green Spaces Group has been formed to progress the aim of developing a framework of infrastructure and support that will enable residents'

groups across Wirral to develop community garden initiatives in under-utilised green spaces, for the enhancement of their health and wellbeing.

Access to green spaces is important for health and wellbeing. A longitudinal study from Scotland found that children living in homes with gardens had better social, emotional and behavioural scores (Richardson, 2017). Residential green space during one's childhood has also been found to lead to a lower risk of psychiatric disorder in adolescence and childhood (Engemann et al., 2019). On average, one in eight British households has no garden (ONS, 2020), whilst many Wirral wards do not have a minimum standard of green space (Green Space Index 2022).

The recent Public Health England report (2020) identifies 'new evidence and actions to help local areas consider how good-quality greenspace can support the delivery of health, social, environmental and economic priorities, at a relatively low cost.' The wellbeing value associated with frequent use of local parks and green spaces has been valued at £34.2 billion per year, whilst saving the NHS £111m per year (Fields in Trust, 2018).

The new or enhanced community gardens will provide a range of green social prescribing interventions which can improve mental health outcomes; reduce health inequalities and reduce demand on the health and social care system. These may include gardening, walking, creative health and wellbeing activities that can help prevent or address social isolation, mental and physical health issues and food poverty. The success of this will depend on excellent referral pathway structures, collaborating with local GP's surgeries and PCN's.

The community gardens will provide opportunities for growing, , social interaction, volunteering, training and employment, and collective food production. They can support residents through the demonstration of healthy cooking with home grown or surplus produce, vital during the current cost-of-living crisis. The development of a joined-up co-operative food strategy across the borough (linking with the Liverpool Food Growers Network) can increase local urban food production for the benefit of local residents, and reduce food waste.

Additionally, this proposal for improving access to green spaces can sustain improvements in nature connectedness that can help address global calls for a new relationship with nature required for a sustainable future (Richardson, 2019). This will support Wirral Council's commitment to action following the declaration of Environment and Climate Emergency in July 2019, achieving biodiversity net gain and contributing to the UN SDG's.

One of the most significant issues for local communities, particularly those without resources or a track record, is the acquisition of land for community engagement and activities. The Green Spaces Group has recently agreed to create a Community Land Trust to help overcome those barriers, providing a legal entity for the

acquisition and protection of green space assets from Council, Health, Church, housing associations, etc. for the benefit of local communities.

Within the framework of the Wirral Green Spaces CLT, the aim would be to empower local residents' groups to take ownership of local community garden greenspaces, though more established CVF organisations may be appointed as interim stewards. They will be supported by the CLT through the services of member organisations who can offer assistance with community engagement; horticultural advice, practice and training; in addition to support with organisational management and fundraising.

Grow-Wellbeing CIC is lead member for environmental issues in the CVF-RG, and has brought together a diverse range of public and CVF sector organisations and elected members, who can contribute to a partnership approach to transform urban community greenspaces for health and wellbeing. The founder has recently been elected to represent the CVFSE sector on the Wirral Place Strategy and Transformation Group.

Grow-Wellbeing CIC aims to support healthy communities through nature connection via Forest School, community gardening and nature wellbeing activities. Since its inception, Grow-Wellbeing has collaborated with partners in health, education, social care, environment and the CVF sector in Wirral, Merseyside and Cheshire. It has created employment opportunities, including traineeships for young people, and is an accredited provider of Forest School Leader Training. Grow-Wellbeing is well placed to assist the co-ordination of the development of the Wirral Green Spaces CLT, collaborating with partners and empowering communities.

Duane Chong, Grow-Wellbeing CIC

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Backup Security Company

Introduction

The work of the CVF-RG came to my attention earlier in the year and I have been invited to participate.

I regard the work of CVF-RG and their approach to working in partnership with communities as a significant opportunity to improve health and wellbeing, focusing on health inequalities as the key area for a full and dynamic, much needed, change programme.

To my mind this is an opportunity not to be missed and I have committed my services and resources to the initiative working with like-minded colleagues.

My name is Barry Fox, and my organisation is Backup Security. In one form or another I have been providing a security service on Wirral since 1999. I grew up on the Wirral, am a family orientated man and live in Central Wallasey. More details of my business and contribution to the work of the RG are provided below.

RG colleagues have built up considerable momentum and, working together at pace in 2023 and beyond with all key service providers, seems to me to be just what is needed after the pandemic and through the emerging cost of living crisis.

I originally started Backup Security in 1999, a service including mobile patrols and response units for houses and businesses in areas such as: Wirral, Upton and Ellesmere Port, with the majority of business in Wallasey and Birkenhead. In 2011 I pulled the business back to have a change of direction and went back to teaching martial arts and specialising in applied Goji Ryu karate in a professional capacity, establishing Fox Martial Arts Academy in Wallasey. This ran alongside courses for local primary and secondary schools with training sessions in the academy for different youth offending organisations.

From 2017, I reopened the Backup Security Company, as both someone working in the security sector, and a member of a community affected by antisocial behaviour, I felt greatly concerned and disappointed that attending all domestic burglaries could no longer be possible. I believed that the demand for reliable and efficient security would have further disparity in areas where these services were most required. This prediction was quickly confirmed as not only are we now closely linked with Merseyside Police, but also through the public response and demand that we have garnered in the past few years we have built up a strong business clientele together with numerous residential clients who have entrusted us with their security. Our company has brought a great level of resolve to a serious epidemic of antisocial behaviour. Approximately eight months ago I found myself still frustrated with the high levels of unreprimanded antisocial behaviour and discovered that the most efficient way of combatting this crisis was by acting as a community.

As a result of this I have set up a Facebook Community Site, which has brought together individuals and acted like a more accessible Neighbourhood Watch, combining an online presence, and feeling of stability to individuals who would otherwise feel frightened and isolated. Currently this group has a base of 8100 users. Not only has it contributed to removing some of the delinquency from the streets, but also the paranoia and helplessness from the homes of our users.

I was recently contacted by Community Voice with an offer to provide my insight working on the Reference Group, and I am here today to explain about myself and what I am involved with locally, offering any support that I can provide from experience and expertise in the Security sector.

Transport Group Aims and Objectives

The Transport Group hopes to be part of Transition Town West Kirby and its Aims and Objectives are as follows

- To promote active transport wherever possible, which includes the promotion of a comprehensive range of cycle lanes, but to acknowledge that not everyone is able to take advantage of active transport, in particular elderly, families and those with disabilities.
- To promote low carbon alternatives in public transport
- To promote public transport and active transport as methods of accessing work and leisure activities and *in order to promote better health, both physical and mental, across the whole of Wirral.*

Though transport is technically a regional issue, to the individual it is a highly personal issue. A member of the group was discharged from A&E at Arrowe Park late at night and would not have been able to reach his home had he not had sufficient for a taxi fare at his disposal. At the same time Wirral contains substantial areas of green space which can benefit members of the community in terms of promoting better mental health. The only costs involved may be in gaining access to it.

Public transport everywhere in the UK is currently under pressure because its revenue is expected to 'bounce back' after Covid. However, it is the opinion of the Transport Group that there should be room for a much more dynamic, community needs-led, small-scale (in terms of the size of vehicles) clean, climate-friendly public transport network that can sit alongside the current public transport provision and that should be capable of moving Wirral properly into the 21st century whilst contributing to balancing the health statistics of Wirral between the more and less affluent areas. Put simply, open space saves lives and getting proper access to it can make a huge difference when times are tough.

The transport group wishes to make a small difference to the assumption that motorised transport is always better if it is privately owned. The Group wishes to complement work being undertaken elsewhere in Wirral that aims to break down barriers that exist for those who, for whatever reason, are disadvantaged (in this case, in terms of having transport needs). The question remains as to exactly what support would best serve the communities most severely affected by Wirral's health inequalities, but the aim is to promote small scale pilot projects that would help to shift the nature of transport in the longer term in ways which would improve the overall health of residents, in particular the mental health of those in the more deprived areas of Wirral. Everyone should feel they have the resources to get home from A&E departments or to visit a public open space and enjoy nature. In itself this would assist better mental health across the board.

The current slogan for Merseytravel is 'efficient, green and affordable'. We believe that from the end user's point of view, a start can be made on addressing some of these short journeys, which could, in turn, improve the life chances and health of the section of Wirral's population which most needs to be boosted.

We hope the above shows that the need exists to co-design a system that works for the end user, both 'essential' and other. We acknowledge that some short journeys via some form of transport other than walking would enable more individuals to make better use of our extensive open spaces and our important healthcare facilities.

We feel that the time to make this commitment is now, in the light of the £2 a ride and re-regulation initiatives being facilitated. Wirral is uniquely placed, being at one and the same time at the heart of the Wirral and Cheshire Health Authority and the Merseytravel area.

There has never been a better time to begin to explore some new solutions which could sow the seeds for future health benefits for those in the most need.

Family Hubs Update for Wirral Health and Well-being Board on 21st December 2022

Wirral has made significant progress towards the implementation of Family Hubs across the borough. A Steering group is now in place with representation from the CVF sector including the Family Toolbox Alliance and the Reference Group to the Health and Well-being board. This work is being led under the supervision of Elizabeth Hartley – Assistant Director: Early help and Prevention.

Transformation funding from the government has begun to be used by the creation of a Family hubs staff team. This is made up of Jean Edwards – Project support Officer, Michelle Richards – Parenting Co-ordinator and Barathi Inbara – 1001 days Co-Ordinator. A Family Hubs Programme Manager has yet to be appointed and alternative approaches are under consideration.

Work has begun on the data requirements for Family Hubs with the aim to link up data, so it feeds into the requirements of the supporting families dataset (Old Troubled Families Programme).

The work ahead to make the roll out of Family Hubs across Wirral is considerable and care needs to be taken not to set expectations as to what constitutes a Family Hub without the voice of the community in full participation.

The National Family Hubs Network lays out different types of Family Hubs including Community led, Expanded Civic Buildings, Repurposed Children's Centres, Health Settings, School Based and virtual hubs. The model being, 'rather than a costly outlay on new infrastructure, a family hub model makes use of existing facilities wherever possible and extends and adapts buildings where necessary' and may include GP surgeries, church and faith communities, local libraries, shops etc. This makes access less daunting for families as it is buildings, they are familiar with and people they have built relationships and trust with. (www.familyhubsnetwork.com)

At the recent, Annual Anna Freud National Conference on inclusion within family hubs it was Church Street Family Hub, Westminster that was held up as an example of what could be achieved. It is impressive and based on three stories with a roof

garden and includes a wide range of health services as well as community activities. This is one type of hub and not necessarily suitable or preferable for all families which is why variety of options for families is crucial as one type does not fit all.

Many schools are now acting as family hubs providing extended services and working with CVF organisations and services including food pantries, uniform support, community liaison workers and mental health services e.g., Place to be and ELSA support, bereavement support and so on.

Wirral now have a virtual Family Hub www.familytoolbox.co.uk which is supported by the early help Family Toolbox Alliance made up of 7 VCFS organisations with a growing membership adding in their websites, social media links and other content.

Community Family Hubs on Wirral

Interest is building within the Wirral community about how organisations and place-based projects can become Family Hubs with discussions and questions arising within the sector as to how the work will be progressed. There is still a lot to be done around keeping families at the centre of the process and finding out how we bring our community assets, including the people of Wirral, together for the well-being of families in the most cohesive, cost effective and accessible ways. How do we work together, with families, creatively, using Family Hubs of all types, sizes and forms to improve health inequalities within our borough, providing the help that families and children need at the time they need it and are ready to access it or want it?

Nationally the Gather Movement (a movement of churches and charities committed to community transformation) have also been sharing good practice on how faith-based organisations can develop the work they do to be most effective in supporting families by providing Family hubs and services. A short presentation was given by the C.E.O. of Ferries Family Groups, belonging to the National

Family Hubs Network, representing Wirral as a community-based Family Hub. Liverpool Catalyst similarly have been sharing information to help equip faith-based organisations to develop and support statutory provision across Liverpool City Region (Liverpool were among the first 75 local authorities in the country to receive funding to enable the rollout of Family Hubs).

Progress of the Reference Group Family Hubs Subgroup

The Family Hubs Team is growing but has not met recently as we were waiting for information around the Wirral Family Hubs Staff and Steering Group teams so we could see how the community, voluntary and faith family hubs might work alongside/ in partnership in an informed way and to the benefit of Wirral families. Now that things are beginning to take shape, we should be able to continue to move forward. The most important thing is, we keep the voice of Wirral families at the centre of the discussions.

(See case study below from a Wirral parent on the benefits of a community-based family hub)

Case Study

MY LIFE STORY WITH FERRIES FAMILY GROUPS

(MY FAMILY)

Before I started Ferries Family, I was a mess. I had suffered years of abuse from a very young age. I had been neglected and rejected most of my life. All I ever wanted was to be a family, feel loved, feel like I belonged somewhere and had tried so hard for years and years to make this happen but, it just never seemed to work. Nothing was ever enough or good enough. I was so lost and broken and angry. I had suffered so much trauma since a young age. I just couldn't understand why when, I had so much love to give. I was isolated and afraid. I had a son aged 4 whose dad I ended up with a Restraining Order on. I had a 6-month-old whose dad was in and out of prison and, I had the social all over me when all I live and breath for are my kids. I had always tried to protect them – I didn't see what I was doing wrong. I was then told about Ferries Family Groups. At first I was so frightened to go. I had manic depression and anxiety so was reluctant to go. So many people were already against me. People had already judged me because of the situation I was in.

One day I had a meeting with school, social and police – just so many professionals and I was alone. I just needed someone to listen to me, someone to help guide me – someone to stick up for me when so many people were against me and not even because of me but, because of my baby's dad.

So after the meeting the next day, I joined a group with Ferries Family. I was so lost and broke at first but after a couple of weeks, I started feeling safe. People were listening to me. They wanted to help and support me. I actually felt like I belonged somewhere and that I mattered. I had lost myself; I didn't know who I was anymore. People would sit and play with my child while I had a coffee and a good cry. The support was amazing. After a few months and a

couple of courses, I started finding who I was and started speaking out for what was right for me and my boys. I decided to break free from my relationship and fought hard to get everyone off my back. I turned mine and my babies lives around. I had confidence, I had a safe place and I actually felt like I belonged somewhere and, the people you meet on the groups and courses made me realise I wasn't alone. More people than I had realised had been through similar things and different things but, makes you realise you're not alone and have to share different coping strategies. I stayed as a member for a number of years and spent a lot of time working on myself and my children. As my children grew older, they were diagnosed with multiple additional needs. I didn't have a clue. I only knew about ADHD but, with the help and support from Ferries, I was able to educate myself on all of them. I have had battles with the school and education and, had to go through EHCP process and still the support had always been there – I've never been alone. As I have grown, I have found myself. I turned all my sadness and anger into passion, and I decided I wanted to help and support people, give them the guidance and support they need. If I could just help save one person from making the same mistakes I did or even just guide them on the right path then that would be enough for me. So I decided last year, I was going to do the volunteer training for Ferries Family Groups. I did this and I am now a volunteer for them, and I absolutely love it – I wouldn't stop it for the world and, while I am helping others without realising it, I am helping myself. I am still working on myself. It just doesn't happen overnight but, with the right help and support, it can happen, and Ferries Family Groups was the one for me. They have helped me grow, they have held me, they have supported me so much and most of all, they accepted me and believed in me when I didn't