

Appendix 2

Precis: Space to Thrive: The role of community spaces in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people, Locality and partners.

This document of 29 pages, starts with an Executive Summary. and is then divided into five sections, two appendices, and a page of end notes/references.

The 3 pages of the Executive Summary describe the reason for the study,

Community spaces play a vital role in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people (CYP). There is growing evidence that loneliness, isolation and weakened social networks are decreasing life satisfaction in this group.

How the study was conducted,

We undertook a literature review, a survey of community organisations, in-depth interviews with community leaders, and roundtables with VCSE and public sector partners. We also sense-checked our research with young people involved in community provision.

More specifically they explored how community spaces support the mental health and wellbeing of young people in three areas,

- The role of community spaces and what they offer.
- The impact of community spaces, activities, and provision of CYP mental health and wellbeing.
- The challenges facing community organisations as they provide spaces and services for CYP.

They claim six key findings were discovered,

1. *Community spaces which support CYP mental health and wellbeing come in all shapes and sizes.*
2. *Community spaces are critical in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of CYP and communities.*
3. *Demand for both “open access” and “specialist provision” is increasing.*
4. *Community spaces offer a low or no cost, depressurised, safe. and relaxed “third space” for CYP away from school and home life.*
5. *Community spaces create positive impact.*
6. *Despite the benefits, community organisations are facing challenges on many fronts in sustaining community spaces.*

And make ten key recommendations under three headings,

Resourcing community organisations, 5 recommendations

Workforce development, 4 recommendations, and

National policy priorities and development, one recommendation

Nine of the recommendations are for the attention of Local Authorities, seven of which are also for the attention of the local ICS, two also for the attention of the PCN and two for the attention of the VCSE. Two are also for the attention of national infrastructure.

The rest of the main document is divided into one page Introduction, followed by a one page on the Research Methodology, 10 pages on the Research Findings, one page on Conclusion and 4 pages on Recommendations.

Two appendices follow, one relating to the Research Methodology and the other providing a most useful diagrammatic representation of Risk Factors and Protective Factors and titled Influences on CYP's mental health and wellbeing.

Finally, a page of End Notes provides references and their websites for additional reading.

CV comments: There is considerable value to local practitioners in this paper, indeed it is difficult to see where there could be any issue with the establishment of community spaces appropriate to the needs of the local CYP and specifically their mental health and wellbeing.

Adapting this research and its finding in the local context at community level is undoubtedly how infrastructure should be developed through local partnerships with full involvement of local communities. In fact it is essential.

Precis: Designing Out the most severe forms of Hardship in Local Areas; A learning report from New Local and Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

This is a 38-page report comprising of five sections; Executive Summary, Introduction, What We Learnt, Conclusion and Acknowledgements.

The Executive Summary is a short two pages pointing out the urgent need for addressing deepening poverty and a focus on 'designing out' its most severe forms in local areas.

It is based on research carried out in the Summer and Autumn of 2022.

It reports four areas where work was undertaken,

- Community-led activity, community participation and efforts to build capacity in communities.
- The network of local support and services
- The convening of local partners
- Data and insight

- ***These are the areas recognised by the CVF-RG and which RG are focusing their aims and efforts in assisting the development of locally-led plans and programmes.***

The report identifies six key areas for action, arranged in three groups.

- a. Building a strategy and coalition.
 - i Build learning and into the heart of local action
 - ii Develop a galvanising shared agendas to connect and grow local action on the root cause of poverty.

- b. Shifting power and redesigning the system
 - i Shift power to people and communities with experience of poverty
 - ii Redesign services and support to make sure people get the right help at the right time.
- c. Creating the conditions for sustainable local change
 - i Unlock more stable and long-term funding that incentivises collaboration and coordinated action on poverty.
 - ii Seek to inform and influence the national policy conversation on poverty.

This is then followed by a 4-page Introduction under four headings:

1. **The need for action.** Here data on deep poverty and destitution is shown to be continuing to rise.

2. **The purpose of this project.** Here the key statement,

'In this project we set out to understand what would be needed to galvanise and deliver on a mission to 'design out' the most severe forms of hardship in a local area. 'Designing out' is a statement of intent – asking what it would look like for a local area to do everything it can to ensure no one experiences the most severe forms of hardship.'

makes the reader fully aware of the direction of the study.

3. **What we did.** Sets out the work programme.

4. **People and communities with experience of poverty.** This section sets out the limited scope of the study and as it relates to communities, working 'ground up' but is frank and bold enough to set this out.

'This project engaged with organisations working across the UK to tackle poverty locally. While the project did not engage directly with communities there was a strong focus on understanding how local partners are working with people and communities.

It then argues how this can be rectified.

'A critical finding explored in the report is that any approach seeking to design out the most severe forms of hardship in a local area should ensure there is a commitment to shift power to people and communities with an experience of poverty.'

Finally, it discusses what is key to success.

'Any approach focused on shifting power to communities also needs to recognise and work with the complex, overlapping and diverse range of communities in a place -paying attention to both place-based communities and other groups or communities formed around an issue of shared experience'.

Author's note: Underlining above is not part of the original document.

The main section of the report, 'what we learnt'. It comprises 26 pages in two sections with a further subdivision into four bullet points in the first section and six in the second.

The first section comprising six pages under a heading, 'Partners across local areas are working tenaciously and creatively to mitigate and tackle poverty', is subdivided into.

1. Community-led activity, community participation and efforts to build capacity in communities.
2. The network of local support and services
3. The convening of local partners
4. Data and insight

Key statements that stand out are

'At the scale of a local authority area, the ability to convene partners to take action on the root causes of poverty is a critical lever'.

'Some individuals, teams and organisations are championing ways to shift power to and work with communities with experience of poverty. Equally, some people and communities are leading local action themselves. But there is often a gap between the ambition and the reality – with a lack of time, resources and strategic alignment all proving barriers. An additional barrier is the mismatch between ambitions to work more deeply with communities and incentives that funding processes, and performance and performance and accountability measures drive'.

'For local areas to make significant progress towards this ambition there needs to be a shift towards collaboration and partnership between national government, councils, and other key local partners. This shift in relationships would help enable mature dialogue on the resources and powers that local areas need to tackle severe hardship and where national action is required'.

The second section, comprising 20 pages and under a heading, 'A framework to help local areas make progress towards designing out the most severe forms of hardship, and a sub-heading Building a strategy and coalition, is subdivided into,

1. Build learning and reflection into the heart of local action.
2. Develop a galvanising shared agenda to connect and grow local action on the root causes of poverty.
3. Shift power to people and communities with experience of poverty
4. Redesign services and support to make sure people get the right help at the right time.
5. Unlock more stable and long-term funding that incentivises collaborative and coordinated action on poverty.
6. Seek to inform and influence the national policy conversation on poverty.

Reference Papers to the CVF Reference Group Update Report to the HWBB July 2023

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