

# Developing a



*In partnership with*



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## Developing a Wellbeing Network

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# Introduction

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In 2015 Kent County Council was successful in securing funding from a Department of Communities and Local Government programme called 'Delivering Differently in Neighbourhoods'. The bid sought to test out the development of new models of social care in two neighbourhoods – Wye & Hinxhill Ward near Ashford and Newington Ward in Thanet. These pilot projects were each exploring themes of improving wellbeing and relieving social isolation and loneliness using a technique called 'Co-Production' – an equality based model of engagement where professionals and non-professionals share power and work together for shared outcomes. The communities involved in the DDN pilots wanted to tackle loneliness through connecting people better, increasing use of the *Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector*, averting crisis and relieving some of the pressure on public services.

To read more about Co-Production check out The Toolbox at the back of this guide.

## **This Toolkit**

This toolkit maps out the process, techniques and tools used in developing the pilot project in Newington Ward – which became the Newington Wellbeing Network. The model devised by the community there is one that can be replicated just about every town, city and village in the UK and customised for your own community's needs.

You will find here a guide to setting up a Wellbeing Network that is in two parts. The first part of the toolkit is called Setting Up Your Project and is a step by step journey of the path to setting up your new project which is based on the path taken by the paid and unpaid workers who set up Newington Wellbeing Network.

The second part is your Tool Box - a collection of information, ideas and resources to help you

develop not only your wellbeing project but also the individuals working in it. The items in The Toolbox are all tried and trusted through the development of the NWN and are there for you to use as resources for developing your own Wellbeing Network.

Setting Up Your Project is presented in two sections. The first section is guidance on pulling together and developing your 'multi-stakeholder group' whose role is to design your project and the next section is guidance on implementing your design. Each Wellbeing Network will develop its own set of priorities however the basic outline will be there in four clear stages:

1. Draw together a group of people to co-design your Wellbeing Network
2. Undertake a process of group and self-development to produce a specific focus for the network
3. Ensure that focus has been fed by community consultation, surveys and visioning
4. Create a Management Group to implement the plans and oversee the development of the network

The underpinning focus for all Wellbeing Networks will be a desire to reduce loneliness and isolation and improve wellbeing. However the methods used to reach those aims will vary from network to network

## **Before we start...**

To make sure everybody understands what it is we are trying to achieve through developing a Wellbeing Network, let's look at some of the notions and concepts underpinning the work. The current health & social care system is deeply flawed. People are living longer, families live farther apart, social and environmental pressures mean that individuals are under immense pressure.

Whilst government budgets have decreased, the population has increased and the popular response has been for public services to respond to crisis. In a survey of Kent County Council Service Users taken in Newington ward in 2015, we found that most people are supported by their families for as long as possible. Then something happens which is beyond the ability of the family to cope with and their first port of call is the GP. On the whole, as a frontline service, GPs know a little about a lot of things and they tend to refer their patients on to other health services or social services thus laying a heavy burden on state resources. GPs do very little referring on to the VCSE sector, largely because they do not know what is available or how people can access it. Yet the VCSE sector is rich with provision and can offer the widest and often the most tailor-made support available.

There is also another flaw in state provided health & social care – despite all good intentions it doesn't and cannot focus on the individual. Community care packages have to be fitted in to a packed schedule for Care Workers and limitations in capacity mean that service users are often receiving small, time-bound visits. These are fulfilling while the worker is there, but can leave people lonely and isolated the rest of the time. Whilst largely positive, care packages can sometimes have a negative impact too. They can create a dependence and disempowerment in the service user who might lack motivation to rehabilitate or do better because it could mean their service might be reduced, leaving them with less or sometimes no social contact at all.

A way of tackling this issue is to move away from a reactionary crisis response to social care needs and towards a preventative, pro-active response. By encouraging people to access VCSE services at an early stage people can often avert a crisis because early intervention will head it off. By building better relationships in the community and reducing social isolation, the serious mental and physical health risks associated with a lack of human interaction can be alleviated. Building connections and neighbourliness can help people to get along to local clubs and activities that may otherwise feel too daunting to attend and of course to generally cooperate with one another. By connecting people, we can help a feeling of neighbourliness to grow and friendships can flourish. This approach also means that those who are most vulnerable and at risk no longer need to be 'hidden away, they

can feel accepted, supported and wanted in their communities. With these improvements we are likely to see an increase in wellbeing and a decrease in physical and mental ill health in people who would otherwise be suffering. This united approach is also very likely to keep crisis at bay for longer or even avoid it altogether.

So how do we make this move away from a 'Crisis Response' to a 'Preventative Response' in social care? We believe the answer lies in Community Development.

Community Development is a facilitated process that helps communities to work better together and attain agreed goals.

Community Development is a process, a journey, and this toolkit sets out a way of negotiating that journey with successful results. If we can facilitate communities to build more connections then we can develop a preventative culture instead of a reactionary culture and that's good for everyone.

# Section 1

## Drawing together a group to co-design the network

### Find your best assets – Connect with local people

Wellbeing Networks take a Community Development approach. Community Development is a grass-roots process by which communities:

- y Become more responsible
- y Organise and plan together
- y Empower themselves
- y Reduce poverty and deprivation
- y Create opportunities
- y Achieve social, economic, cultural, health & environmental goals

Any project using Community Development as its base needs to be:

- y A long term endeavour
- y Well planned
- y Inclusive and equitable
- y Integrated into the bigger local picture
- y Of benefit to the community and grounded in experience

The project also needs to build the capacity of the people involved. This means that as well as the project making gains in learning, practice and understanding as a group, there also needs to be space for this to happen on an individual level. The first step in doing this is to identify who your people are and in order to do this you need to be familiar with the neighbourhood you plan to work in and with the people who live and work there.

Making community contacts and mapping assets is a good way to start working in a neighbourhood. Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) is a method that encourages you to look not only at assets in terms of physical buildings and resources but also in terms of human assets – the people who live and work in that community.

There are several ways that you can begin mapping your assets:

- y Get out on the streets and talk to residents
- y Put up posters advertising your presence and invite people to talk with you
- y Attend local groups to gather views
- y Meet with existing organisations and get a feel for the work they already do
- y Talk to local service providers such as GP surgeries, Housing Associations, Schools, Libraries
- y Chat with local businesses and shop owners – Post Office, Pub, Chemist and Hairdressers are ideal
- y Take a few taxi rides and talk with the cab drivers – they know all the local news and views
- y Research online for local events and activities - check out Facebook groups and pages
- y Read local newspapers, parish magazines, community newsletters

You can read more about ABCD and Asset-Mapping in The Toolbox.

### Build your assets - Pull people, groups and organisations together



Once you have identified your assets you need to work out the best way to maximise them. Where the assets are buildings or spaces, it's good to find out what they are already used for and where they could be improved. Where the assets are groups

or organisations, find out what each organisation offers – are there gaps or duplication? Where they are services, do they meet the needs of the community – are they accessible and flexible? Where your assets are local people, find out what they think, how do they want to be involved, what skills, knowledge and experience do they offer?

One of the most effective ways to harness all this energy and kick-start your network is to invite your community to a public meeting.

## Organising your public meeting



You will immediately see the benefit of mapping your assets and you will be able to use those assets to help you in your organisation and in the promotion of your public meeting – the meeting that introduces the community to the notion of setting up a 'Wellbeing Network'. The purpose of this public meeting is not only to introduce people to the idea of setting up a Wellbeing Network but also this will be your first opportunity to recruit and pull together a group of people who want to take the project forward.

Considering the list below will help you get the best from your public meeting:

**Invitations and publicity:** Use every avenue possible to connect with your community and invite them to the public meeting. Simple posters with a clear message put up locally will reach many – especially if they are at bus shelters, local shops and services for example the Library or GP surgery. A personal invitation to known contacts will ensure a good result. You may also want to put a notice in the local paper and of course make good use of social media, for example posting an invitation on all the local Facebook groups for the area.

**Venue:** You may find that a local community resource will support you by giving free space for your meeting. Perhaps a school, a church hall or even a local pub?

**Time and day of meeting:** This needs thinking about. It's worth checking that there are no other local meetings or events happening that might clash with yours. Is the date and time suitable for the audience you want to attract? Checking out what's on TV is also a good idea – your meeting may not be able to compete with a popular television programme or sporting event!

**Equalities:** Is the venue accessible to everybody? Is there enough parking outside? It's a good idea to print any documents you are using in large print or easy-read versions, so that everyone can read them. Do you need to consider childcare needs – perhaps a crèche? Are the seats suitable? Some people may need seats with arms.

**Promotion:** Groups and businesses will be willing to spread the word about your meeting. Community buildings, shops and services will put up posters. Contacts that have an online presence will notify the community by email or Facebook.

**Refreshments:** You may be able to get sponsorship for refreshments for your meeting by a local church, community group, supermarket or other business.

This approach also has the added bonus of establishing relations and galvanising a reciprocally beneficial future relationship.

**Organisation:** Ideally you will plan and deliver the meeting in partnership with one or more of your assets - for example an existing local community group. This will serve the result of not only having another body to share tasks with but their contacts should ensure a fair turnout for this initial meeting.

**Agenda:** The agenda for the meeting needs to include space for people to introduce themselves in the room and perhaps a talk by someone who can share their experiences of already setting up a 'Wellbeing Network'. A Questions & Answers session and time at the end for people to sign up to be involved is a must.

**Registration:** Remember to register people at the beginning but please make it clear on your signing

in sheet where the information will be stored and what for. Feel free to use the public meeting as a space for gathering further information about the community through participatory tools such as a vision board

**Photographs:** With permission from your audience, allocate someone to take photos of the event. This not only serves as a record but will also be useful if you send out a press release afterwards.

**At the end of the event:** Make a commitment to get in touch individually with everybody who has volunteered to sit on your Co-design group. This ensures that a) you can be sure any further queries can be ironed out b) you are starting to build new relationships and c) you can find out more about what is driving them to be involved.

**Individual Follow-Ups:** Following the success of your first Public Meeting make personal contact fairly quickly with the individuals who signed up to join your steering group. Where possible, do this face to face because this will cement a relationship far better than an email, text or even a phone call. Not to say that these are not valuable forms of communication – they are – but the first follow up will always produce the best outcome if it is face to face.

## **Planning and delivering your first group meeting**

If you are working in Co-Production and really want your group to feel empowered, then it is best to ensure that all decisions ABOUT the group are done WITHIN the group. If you can build consensus in your group – that is, decisions are jointly agreed and then you are more likely to build sustainability. This means the group has a better chance at establishing a strong foundation and longevity. There is an old slogan that says all that there needs to be said about ‘shared ownership’:

“Don’t do nothing about us, without us” and it is completely true.

If you are using this toolkit as a guide in developing your group and project then maybe it would be a good ice-breaker to go through some of the concepts that influence the journey together – for example Asset-mapping, Co-Production and Co-design power sharing which can be found in The Toolbox at the back.

You may want to use one of the exercises in the Tool Box too. These ensure that everyone is comfortable with each other and agrees on the group’s purpose. Most people will step forward to join a group of this sort because it meets a need in them – professionals often have targets to meet, retired people often have skills and knowledge to offer, volunteers often find that helping others also helps them.

Whatever the reason for an individual’s involvement, they are all valid. Anything that keeps a person committed and engaged in the group is a good thing and it’s great to have a variety of motivating forces.

## **Language**

All too often professionals slip into jargon and acronyms. The way we communicate needs to be clear and understandable. You might like to set an agreement in your group that no acronyms are to be used unless people are familiar with them already and probably by the third or fourth meeting they will be. Professionals need to be aware of the language they are using but equally non-professionals will do well to expand their knowledge of these terms as this can give them power when in conversation with public and voluntary sector services. For links to useful resources and jargon-busters please check in The Toolbox.

## **Defining your purpose**

The nature of this toolkit is to help communities support the wellbeing of residents in their area. What wellbeing means for residents may be different and varied and so it is the job of the group to find out exactly what wellbeing constitutes for people in their community and what needs to happen to improve it. Before any of that work can be done the group needs to establish its purpose and firm up the role of people involved.

Ground rules and practical arrangements need to be established early on:

- y Which venue to use?
- y What time and day?
- y Will there be a ‘chairperson’ or will the leadership role rotate amongst group members?
- y Who will take notes of the meetings?
- y Who will the notes be sent out to?

- y Who can attend? Do new people need to be invited?
- y How confidential do the meetings need to be?

## What's in a name?

To begin defining your identity you can discuss the name of your group – is it a co-design group? Or a steering group? Perhaps it is a network forum or a co-ordinating team? It's really important that the group themselves decide what they are, as this is part of understanding their purpose. In Newington they decided on being a steering group, with the focus being very much on 'steering the project' much like a ship is steered across the sea from start to destination.

## Create your Mission Statement

Another good step to take is to define a mission statement. NWN did this exercise early on in the life of their project to enable the group to have a clear aim. The resulting mission statement became part of the NWN logo and is used on all communications that go out. Again, guidance on developing a mission statement is in The Toolbox.

## S.W.O.T Analysis

Undertaking a S.W.O.T analysis will help the group understand their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It is a really good way to help head off any difficulties, understand and value contributions, see ways of working better in the future and highlight training or development needs. A template for undertaking a S.W.O.T analysis for your group can be found in The Toolbox.

## What does it mean to be a Stakeholder?

We speak about these design groups as 'multi-stakeholder forums' but what does that actually say? What is a stakeholder and what does it mean to have a stake in the forum or project? Essentially a stakeholder is someone that has an interest (a stake) in the outcome of the project. Their stake is what hooks them in and keeps them involved. Their stake is the 'pay-off' they get from being a part of the project.

It is important that people recognise their stake in the project because this keeps them committed. If occasionally the momentum of the group wavers then it's a good idea to revisit the notion of

stakeholders and help people identify why they are involved and what they hope to gain.

It is the role of the stakeholder to not just attend meetings but also to build the capacity of the group; that means making it stronger and equipping it with the skills and resources it needs to increase its success. For example a stakeholder may invite a new person to join the group, if that person has a particular skill or interest. Stakeholders may pull in other partners who can supply expertise or resources. Stakeholders will also need to keep their organisation, network or neighbours informed about the development of the project so they become a conduit for ideas and information coming in and out of the group.

Stakeholders will also recognise that they have as much to give as to gain and so your group will be able to share and exchange skills, knowledge and physical resources. One of the wonderful things about a wellbeing network is that it not only develops the people involved but it also develops the organisations involved. Through increased partnership working, information sharing and a willingness to support one another, organisations increase their own scope and capacity and work together to achieve greater common goals.

In The Toolbox you will find a template for an exercise that you can do with the group to define stakeholder responsibilities and identify their stakes. Below are some examples of likely stakeholders and their stake in the success of the project:

Non-Statutory worker – May have personal investment, networking opportunities, social improvements.

Business owner – Raises awareness of business, increased customer base, social commitment.

Local resident – Wants to connect with other people and see improved conditions where they live.

Church representative – Hopes for a greater reach for the church, hopes for better use of their facilities.

Statutory Worker – May have targets to achieve, interested in the improved wellbeing of local people.

Retired volunteer – Wants to make good use of their time and skills, wants to 'give something back'.

Local Councillor – Build their reputation, be active in the community they serve and gain an understanding of the issues facing their constituents.

Community resource worker – Increased footfall in their resource, greater engagement in their activities

## Setting out your Vision

What do we mean by ‘setting out a vision’?

This is where we start to build a strategy (or plan) so that we know the direction we are heading in.

The essential principles of a wellbeing network are that it is:

- y Confined to a specific area or community
- y That that area is broken down into smaller, manageable areas, each with their own identity
- y That each of the smaller areas has network volunteers/community representatives in them
- y That those representatives act as conduits for information-sharing, connecting people and building activities.

However, each community will be fine-tuned by its residents, who know what they need to improve their wellbeing and may have many ideas about how to achieve it. It is likely they even already have the solutions to their problems. The job of your group is to ask the questions, gather the answers and work things through together.

Running a public event where you can ask the local community to set out their ‘vision’ is a very exciting stage of building the network. It is not enough to set out a vision by a small steering group alone, the way forward is to test out that vision and engage people in the development of it. One good way to do this is to organise a ‘Visioning Event’ where you can invite your community to help you set the best priorities to achieve the project aims.

In Newington, we knew we wanted to focus the event on alleviating loneliness and isolation and we built our exercises around exploring ‘wellbeing’ with residents in the local community. We asked them ‘what does a good life look like for you’?

Invitations went out via local groups and organisations, leaflets and posters, a slot in local radio and by word of mouth. On the day over 40 people took part in the event.

The Newington steering group decided to focus the day around creative group activities that would encourage sharing of ideas in a non-threatening way. Participants were invited to sit round tables together and, using art materials, answer some key

questions. In The Toolbox is the outline of the vision event in Newington, it may give you an idea of how you might set yours out.

## Supporting your vision



Along with the information gleaned from the Vision Event, the steering group in Newington also looked at facts and figures from a wide range of sources to ensure the model they came up with was underpinned with evidence and verified. They decided early on that they would design a model that would a) work universally and b) leave space so that within the overall general model, more local solutions could be found. With this in mind they knew that the design could literally be rolled out anywhere.

They looked at information from Campaign to End Loneliness, Age UK and other national organisations. They looked at data supplied by Public Health and the Census. They undertook a local survey of KCC service recipients. They had a stall at a local arts festival where they asked people to write down their ideas for helping their neighbours. All of these informed the development of the Wellbeing Network.

## Keeping the community informed and involved



One thing that is really important for your project is keeping your community informed about the project. One way that you can do this is to have another public meeting to let people know what the issues are and explain what you are trying to achieve. You may find you can recruit volunteers or new partners through an event of this kind.

You can design a newsletter and get volunteers to deliver them across your area. In Newington they were lucky enough to secure sponsorship from local businesses to fund the newsletter they produced. You might want to write articles for local newspapers or church magazines or even get a slot on local radio.

Using social media is essential and setting up a Facebook page, a community calendar, twitter account, blog or website are all good ways of keeping people informed.

NWN also developed an 'Engagement Checklist' which meant that for every event or public meeting they held there was a set of tasks that needed to be done to ensure residents were engaged and that the event ran smoothly. You can find a sample copy in The Toolbox.

# Section 2

## Implementing and managing your project

Once you have pulled together your group and undertaken your research, you'll then have a clear design to move forward with. Every Wellbeing Network created has a clear framework. Remember, the essential principles of a wellbeing network are that it is:

- y Confined to a specific area or community
- y That that area is broken down into smaller, manageable areas, each with their own identity
- y That each of the smaller areas has network volunteers/community representatives in them
- y That those representatives act as conduits for information-sharing, connecting people and building activities.

### Confine your project to a specific area or community

Be clear about your boundaries before you begin implementing your plan. Know which area you are going to work within, this may be especially important if you are collecting data and measuring success.

### Break the area down into smaller, manageable areas, each with their own identity

Breaking the area down into smaller chunks is a management tool to help the group get some quick wins at a macro level. People may not care much about what happens six streets away but they will care about their more immediate neighbours. It is also likely that people in a small area may have a common concern.



### Each smaller area has network volunteers/community representatives in them

By activating these smaller areas you are more likely to be able to connect with and recruit local volunteer representatives and activists as well as begin to involve people in low level social support. Representatives act as conduits for information-sharing, connecting people and building activities. It may be the case that certain skills and experience of people in one smaller area can be used by another area, so they might join up for activities, events and even 'peer to peer' training days.

Representatives will need to be kept informed and involved by the Management Group so that they can impart information and link people up at a macro level. In Newington they do this by holding monthly 'What's Happening?' information sharing events that travel to community resources throughout the area.

### The role of the Management Group

The role of the Management Group is to implement the Wellbeing Network that you have designed. The Management Group will be a partnership group of individuals and organisations who want to move the project forward and have a vested interest in its success. In Newington this group meets regularly and is made up of:

- y Newington Free Church
- y St Christopher's Church
- y Copperfields supported housing unit
- y Newington Big Local
- y Newington Community Centre
- y RAMLETS
- y NHS Health Trainer
- y Job Centre Plus

The project is facilitated, supported and underpinned by a project officer employed by Kent County Council Health & Social Care Commissioning.

The role of the Management Group is to oversee the development of the Wellbeing Network and move the project forward. In Newington the MG has decided to stay working in co-production and have a rotating 'Lead' and 'Note-taker' for their meetings rather than formalise the organisation. It has stayed as a Partnership Group and has the status of an Unincorporated Association.

## RAMLETS



In Newington they are incorporating a Local Exchange and Trading System (LETS) into the project. The System there is called RAMLETS and is essentially a way of exchanging goods and services without the need for money. The scheme does use a currency (Rams) and encourages people to give and take in the community to build and spend their currency. People living and working in the area are encouraged to register a skill or service on the website [www.ramsgatelets.org.uk](http://www.ramsgatelets.org.uk) and people who help on the project are given 'Rams' instead of money as a reward for their involvement so they can then trade on the site.

Resource centres are also using Ramlets to find local people that can help them with events and even practical tasks.

More about setting up your own Local Exchange & Trading System or linking into existing ones can be found here: [www.letslinkuk.net](http://www.letslinkuk.net)

### Engaging your community

One of the first tasks of the Management Group is to look at how the wider community can be engaged in the project. This is perhaps the biggest task of all and takes intensive work and planning. In Newington, their research had told them they needed to take a two-pronged approach to reduce

isolation and improve wellbeing. One arm of the work was to develop better ways of getting information out to people living in the area and to help build better relationships between the organisations working there.

It is often the case in Newington that organisations that are working just metres away from one another don't connect or even know what work the other does. In Newington they set up 'round-table events' where organisations and local people come together (over cake and a cuppa) to talk about what activities go on in the local area. They call these information-sharing forums 'What's Happening' events. Their purpose is to bring people together on the same level, in a relaxed atmosphere, to find out not only what is available in the local community but also whether they may have somethings in common with other attendees, offering potential for new friendships to develop. The forums can be attended by anyone that wants to come – local businesses that may have jobs or special offers, local groups that want to promote an event or club, public organisations that want to promote their services and of course local residents who want to connect with others and broaden their horizons.

These events have been successful in allowing organisations to work better together and supporting local people to get access to services or engage in local activities and volunteering.

The other arm of the work is for the partners themselves to 'activate' people who are involved in their organisations or that live in their branches. The ultimate aim here is to connect residents in the local area so that a network of activity forms – thus truly building the 'Wellbeing Network'. Through a spirit of neighbourliness people who are isolated or struggling with something in particular can be connected with someone who can help them. People with common interests can be brought together and by using the LETS scheme neighbours can also offer practical help to one another. For example:

- y Sharing gardening or DIY equipment
- y Taking in parcels
- y Sharing the cost of bulk deliveries from supermarkets
- y Giving someone a lift to an appointment
- y Popping in a meal
- y Picking up some shopping

There is also scope for neighbourhood activities such as street parties or community outings.

Early on, the Management Group designed a 'Communications & Engagement' checklist, which gives a step by step guide to promoting any events that they design.

One of the early ways that local people can be engaged in the project is to ask for volunteers for leafleting in the local area. Yes, it would be easy to ask a professional company to deliver leaflets however this does not build connectedness and activity in the community. Volunteers are likely to meet their neighbours and chat about what's going on in the project when they are leafletting, which just wouldn't happen if the work was given to a professional company. We also incorporate volunteers into the LETS scheme so they accrue currency with every meeting they attend or leaflet round they undertake. In Newington a few of the volunteers take their children out leafletting with them which is another good way to get young people involved.

You can find a sample 'What's Happening in Newington' leaflet and a Communication & Engagement checklist in The Toolbox.

## Building the network

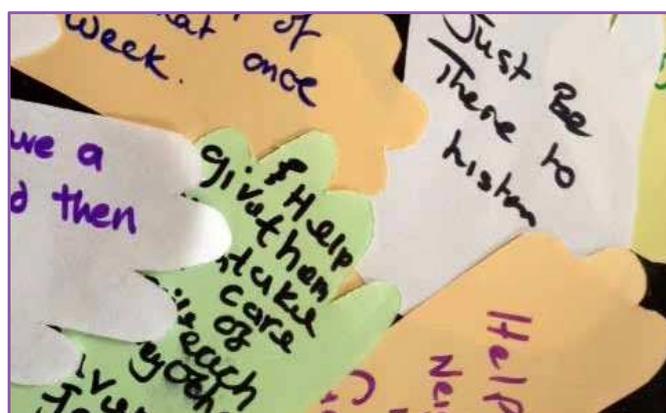
It is essential that partners on the Management Group do not merely attend management meetings and allow it to be a 'talking shop'. Although the role of the MG is to develop the project and move it forward the most important contribution that a partner can make to the MG is to act as a conduit between it and the local community. Each partner has its own links into the local community and it is by building on these links that the wellbeing network can grow and get more local people involved. For example a church can call on its congregation to get involved, a service can call on its service users to get involved, a local group can call on its participants to get involved, a business can call on its staff and customers to get involved and of course existing local volunteers and activists can be encouraged to get involved too.

## Funding the network

In Newington the project runs largely by goodwill and a sharing of resources. So for example, when there is an event every partner pitches in with

something to contribute. Venues and refreshments are given freely and when a leaflet run is needed partners share the printing. Because Newington Wellbeing Network has not yet constituted itself it is not able to access public funding and so it has turned to the local business community for sponsorship. This has been a successful exercise as businesses have not only offered sponsorship but also support and specialist advice to assist the growth of the network. In turn the businesses get promotion through the network and potentially more links and customers so it is a 'win:win' situation for everyone.

## Measuring your success



Most public funded projects will need to measure the impact of their work and even groups that are not publicly funded will want to be able to see that their project has had been successful. With something like a Wellbeing Network this isn't an easy concept to prove. Traditional monitoring of pre-prescribed goals doesn't apply well because the project is co-designed and organic and so the goals are not set out firmly at the beginning in terms of greater outcome, although some monitoring of involvement can take place from the start.

In other words if you begin with 0 people involved and two years later you have 25 people involved then there is a measure of success. You can also measure the wellbeing of those involved by using questionnaires and surveys taken at the beginning and throughout their involvement, which will hopefully grow and become more committed.

With a partnership there is a brilliant opportunity for partners to share any targets that they may have met through being involved in the Wellbeing Network. For example if one month a partner gains a volunteer through their involvement, and another gains a client, and another gains a customer and

yet another gains a worker, these can all be accrued in a central register of 'monthly returns' and used to measure the impact of involvement and success in the network.

You may also want to look at a wider picture of figures related to health and social care, for example whether the network may impact on the numbers of people accessing GP surgeries, or Accident & Emergency services, or Social Services however there is always a question of how can you be certain it was your project that impacted on those figures and not another service in the community. These figures are interesting but not always provable.

Anecdotal stories are another way of measuring success, those little cameo tales of how being involved in the network has made a difference to someone – the person who extended their boundaries and developed self-esteem, the worker who took on some new tasks and developed their skills, the organisation that found a new partner to work with, the resident whose practical problem was solved, the service that met a long awaited target, the volunteer who got back into work, the house-bound person who found motivation to get out of their home – the possibilities for life-changing evidence are endless.

### **Building sustainability**

Everyone involved will want the Wellbeing Network to have a strong future and that will be part of their investment. People have put a lot of time and energy into the project and it would be a great shame for that to have no legacy.

However to build that strong future it is essential that the project is imbedded in the community it serves. The Wellbeing Network model should help you to do that – it has all the hallmarks of a community owned project that has the potential to last and grow:

1. It has been designed and developed by the community it serves.
2. It is managed by the community it serves.
3. The sharing of resources and partnership working ensures potentially long-lasting relationships.
4. The engagement of volunteers at a macro level in the community means that local people are engaging with each other and sharing information which gives them, and the project, power.

5. The connecting of local residents with each other means that helpful relationships are cemented.
6. The breaking down of barriers amongst neighbours allows for new possibilities that can take the project forward.

Lastly the gradual taking on of responsibilities and skilling up of partners means the work becomes rooted in the organisations involved and therefore in the neighbourhoods that they are connected with.

### **Possibilities**



When you are developing a Wellbeing Network the possibilities are endless. Because each network is responding to needs at a macro level every network will be different. Wellbeing means different things to different communities. For example for your community the development of a children's play space or community garden may be paramount in a particular area. Perhaps you lack a community building and want to pull together to develop one or take over an existing one in another area. Maybe you want to start up a programme of activities for families and young people. Maybe you want to set up a community lunch club or meal delivery service. Once you have activated your volunteers the world is your oyster and lateral thinking is the name of the game. Here are some ideas of schemes and projects which can be incorporated into your wellbeing network to bring people together, alleviate social isolation and increase wellbeing:

- y Bulk-buy schemes
- y Shared supermarket deliveries
- y Clean-up days
- y Special interest clubs
- y Community outings
- y Walk & talk

- y LETS
- y Street parties
- y Play-days
- y Dinner guest scheme
- y Telephone circle
- y Car share schemes
- y Community lunches
- y Dog walking club
- y Incredible edibles

# Your Toolbox

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## 1. Co-Production

The term co-production refers to a way of working, whereby everybody collaborates on an equal basis to create a service or come to a decision which has positive outcomes for all. It is built on the principle that those who use - or may use - a service, are best placed to design it and focusses on 'people not process'. Working in co-production means we focus on individual and collective strengths and assets, so it sits very well alongside ABCD. The Care Act's statutory guidance says that co-production is:

'When an individual influences the support and services received, or when groups of people get together to influence the way that services are designed, commissioned and delivered'.

The guidance says that co-production needs the following things to work:

- y Recognise people as assets (and use the skills, experience and strengths they have to design and run services).
- y Build on people's capabilities.
- y Develop two-way, reciprocal relationships.
- y Encourage peer support.
- y Facilitate rather than deliver.
- y Make sure that power is balanced between people getting support, and the people who support them

Edgar Cahn also wrote about co-production in his book 'No more throw-away people'. He adds these principles:

- y Value work differently - that work in the 'Core Economy' (work of everyday life) is of equal value to paid/professional work.
- y Build social networks so that people get more connected – and supported!

## 2. Asset-Based Community Development

The ABCD approach was developed by John L. McKnight and John P. Kretzmann at the Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. They co-authored a book in 1993 entitled "Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilising a Community's Assets". The guiding principles of ABCD are:

- y Everyone has gifts: each person in a community has something to contribute
- y Relationships build a community: people must be connected for sustainable community development to take place
- y Citizens are at the centre: citizens should be viewed as players—not recipients—in development
- y Leaders involve others: community development is strongest when it involves a broad base of community action
- y People do care: challenge notions of "apathy" by listening to people's interests
- y Listen: decisions should be born of conversations where people are truly heard
- y Ask: asking for ideas is more sustainable than giving solutions

ABCD acknowledges that every community has assets that are already within its midst. The role of the development worker is to mobilise local individuals and organisations to identify and acknowledge those assets and build on their strengths. The greatest assets that any community has are of course the people living there and ABCD holds this tenet firmly at its foundation. It is a positive approach that encourages momentum and growth.

Systems currently present in the delivery of Health & Social Care have, over the years, encouraged a dependency on the state to fulfil their needs. This has led to a breakdown in 'neighbourliness' and

self-confidence whereby people assume that they are not skilled enough to meet the challenges in their own lives. An asset-based approach contrasts with the deficit-based manner in which services are currently delivered, whereby the focus in assessment and provision is centred on what a person can't do rather than what they can. An asset-based approach in Health and Social Care assumes that individuals have a rich store of knowledge, skills, experience and potential within them which, if tapped into and encouraged, can support the improvement of their own wellbeing.

Using ABCD requires a shift in mind-set for all involved – for the disempowered to become empowered and for the 'powerful' to develop humility. This approach employs a deliberate intention to 'step back' from leading the community which can be very challenging for local authority staff who are used to being in the driving seat and are accustomed to structure, tight hierarchical control and bureaucratic process.

Any project that employs an ABCD approach will be time-intensive to develop, however it will be community-driven and therefore have a greater chance of a sustainable future.

### **3. Arnstein's Ladder of Participation**

Sherry Arnstein devised this tool several decades ago but it is still as relevant today. The ladder helps you understand if you are acting in a truly participatory way and sharing power and control equally. It is a great way to self-monitor your participatory approach - especially if you are working in Co-Production!

As a group it is useful to look at this info-gram together, where you can check if you are really sharing power rather than 'ticking a box'. Too often organisations have pre-set ideas and predicted outcomes they want to see. Consultation can sometimes be an exercise in bureaucracy. Using the Ladder of Participation can help you see where you are and where you need to move towards to truly share control and power.

(Ladder shown overleaf).

## The Ladder of Participation

Where are we performing on the ladder of participation?

The Ladder of Participation can provide a means of evaluating the quality of engagement with communities and individuals.

Participants have the idea, setup project and invite staff to join with them in making decisions.	Participants initiate, shared decisions	
Participants have the initial idea and decide how the project is to be carried out. Staff are available but do not take charge.	Participants direct	
Staff have the initial idea but participants are involved in every step of the planning and implementation: their views are considered and they are involved in taking the decisions.	Staff initiate, shared decisions with participants	Degrees of participation
The project is designed and run by staff but participants are consulted. They have a full understanding of the process and their opinions are taken seriously.	Consulted and informed	
Staff decide on the project and participants volunteer for it. Staff respects their views.	Assigned and informed	
	Tokenism	Participants are asked to say what they think about an issue but have little or no choice about the way they express those views or the scope of the ideas they can express.
Non - participation	Decoration	Participants take part in an event but they do not understand the issue.
	Manipulation	Participants do or say what staff suggest they do, but have no real understanding of the issue, or have been asked what they think. Staff use some of their ideas but do not tell them what influence they have had on the final decision.

Please circle which rung on the ladder we are performing at.

## 5. Maslow's Hierarchy of needs

Another way to measure your project status and direction is to study Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Needs' model. Abraham Maslow was a psychologist who was best known for creating a theory of psychological health based on fulfilling human needs. Maslow says that unless your needs are met at one level it is hard to progress to the next level of function. He devised a 'pyramid' which shows the progression from attaining basic needs to what he called 'self-actualisation' or ultimate fulfilment.

You can see where your community sits in the pyramid and get an idea of where you need to be going to encourage people to reach their full potential. In Newington we were already reaching Physiological needs as well as some Safety & Security needs but needed to develop the third level of Love & Belonging before we could enable the community to develop confidence and a sense of achievement.



## 6. Language

Both professionals and non-professionals need to be aware of the language they are using. Here are some good links to help you maintain clear and understandable conversation in your group and communications:

<https://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/Latest/Social-Care-Jargon-Buster>

<http://www.slam.nhs.uk/patients-and-carers/jargon-buster>

<http://www.communityplanning.net/glossary/glossary.php>

## 7. Participatory tools: Exercises and ideas

Please find here a series of exercises and tools that will help you to develop cohesion, shared understanding, common goals and purpose as well as develop a strategic plan.

### A. Defining your purpose

An early group exercise that you can do to build cohesion is one that asks these questions:

- y Who are we?
- y Why are we here?
- y What difference do we want to make?

You can set out 3 large sheets of paper each with a question on OR if mobility might be a problem for some people, you can give everyone a smaller sheet with the 3 questions on each.

Ask people to think about the questions and put down their answers. Once everyone is finished writing the responses can be shared and collated into a document that sets out the jointly agreed purpose of the group. In Newington it looked like this:

#### Who are we?

- y A growing organisation that wants to enable people of Newington and steer.
- y We are a group of local individuals, working together to make a difference in our local area.
- y People looking to make the community better.
- y Leadership/partnership.
- y Local people.
- y Steering group.
- y A group of planners and facilitators.
- y Community Group.
- y Local people promoting Newington Estate.
- y Association of local residents and workers.

#### Why are we here?

- y To draw together different skill sets to establish and develop an independent, stronger community.
- y To try and do our bit to help improve quality of life for community.
- y To deliver support and help the people of Newington.
- y To improve the quality of life of the people of Newington.
- y To help our community.
- y To help people in the community.
- y We believe people know best what their needs

are and can be trusted to make better decisions than 'experts'.

- y To empower and change the lives of elderly and additional needs people across the Newington estate.
- y Get more residents to empower themselves.
- y To take projects forward to improve people's lives.

#### What difference do we want to make?

- y A positive one!
- y Involvement.
- y To ensure people get information and help to receive any help they are entitled to. Also to improve the quality of life for those housebound etc.
- y Improve lives of other people.
- y To improve links between professionals and residents.
- y To improve the wellbeing of vulnerable adults.
- y We want to see services delivered in a different way across Newington.
- y To give Newington residents pride in their estate.
- y To make social care across the board in Newington accessible to all ages and better.
- y To strengthen the community spirit.

### B. Developing a Mission Statement

Working together on a mission statement can really consolidate your group and help to give a clear purpose to your work. One way to do that is to engage in the following exercise:

*Look at the examples of mission statements from well-known companies and organisations below and discuss which ones represent the work they are doing well and which ones not so well. Then in pairs sit down and write a short mission statement for your group. Be mindful of the aim of the work you want to do and what you hope to achieve.*

#### Mission statements

A Mission Statement gives your project focus. It sets out your goal and acts as a compass. The best mission statements include:

1. Who You Serve (Who is important?)
2. An Action (What are you doing?)
3. A Result (What change can you see?)

The best mission statements are clear, memorable, and concise.

## Examples:

Oxfam: To create lasting solutions to poverty, hunger, and social injustice.

eBay: Provide a global trading platform where practically anyone can trade practically anything.

The Humane Society: Celebrating Animals, Confronting Cruelty

Nike: To bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world.

Tesco: To create value for customers to earn their lifetime loyalty

Thanet Lions: To Empower volunteers to serve their communities, meet humanitarian needs, encourage peace and promote international understanding through Lions Clubs.

Save the Children: To inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.

Make-A-Wish: We grant the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions to enrich the human experience with hope, strength and joy.

Facebook: Facebook's mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected.

East Kent Headway: Headway promotes wider understanding of all aspects of brain injuries and provides information, support and services to people with a brain injury, their families and carers.

The Mission Statement for NWN now sits on their logo and sets out their intention.

## Newington Wellbeing Network



Connecting the people and organisations of Newington,  
to improve communication, increase wellbeing and reduce isolation

*“Connecting the people and organisations of Newington, to improve communication, increase wellbeing and reduce isolation”*

## C. SWOT analysis

Another early exercise for your group to do is an analysis of its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats commonly known as a SWOT exercise. By setting these out early you can analyse and offset your Strengths against your Threats and your Weaknesses against your Opportunities. The SWOT analysis can bring clarity to a situation and also highlight where further development work or training needs to be done. Below are useful definitions that help people understand what is meant by Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

### Strengths

‘Internal resources or capabilities that will support the achievement of your aims’

*Forexample:*

A good team of volunteers, regular meetings, a venue, local knowledge.

### Weaknesses

‘Internal forces that may act as a barrier to maintaining or achieving your aims’

*Forexample:*

Only a small group of workers, pessimism, lack of skills, conflict between members.

### Opportunities

‘External forces that could provide certain advantages’

*Forexample:*

Training courses, access to funding, good partnership work, supportive local councillors.

### Threats

‘External forces that could prevent you from attaining your aims’

*Forexample:*

A new building development, change of local government, an opponent.

Strengths can support your Opportunities, Weaknesses can assist or cause Threats

The exercise works best if done in two stages. In the first stage give group members individual SWOT worksheets to think about the answers and record them. Next, as a group, start to fill in a larger template together. Often doing this in a group sparks other thoughts and confidence can build in sharing ideas.

# SWOT analysis

## Internal forces

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S

W

O

T

The early SWOT exercise undertaken by the Newington Wellbeing Network is shown here as an example:

## Newington Delivering Differently in Neighbourhoods Group Swot analysis November 4th 2015

### Strengths

- y Enthusiasm of group members
- y Commitment to project aims
- y Wide ranging experience
- y I'm here and I'm willing to look at it differently
- y No money - means ideas come first
- y People's skills are the biggest asset
- y Project has a Big Local foundation
- y Good advocates for older people on board
- y Good community spirit
- y Reliable group members

### Weaknesses

- y Need to communicate in a variety of inclusive ways - not always using a computer
- y Dealing with conflicting opinions
- y Professional constraints - within organisations
- y Personal/time constraints
- y Literacy issues
- y Lack of confidence in group members to share their views

### Opportunities

- y Opportunity to network and share information upwards and downwards
- y Marketing projects with confidence
- y Motivating people
- y 'Upskilling' through training and development
- y Meeting stakeholders/Partners for funding/resources
- y Big Local support funding
- y Orbit Housing/ West Kent Housing
- y Local Councillor support/influence
- y Can develop jobs in future
- y Bring generations together
- y Stop social isolation

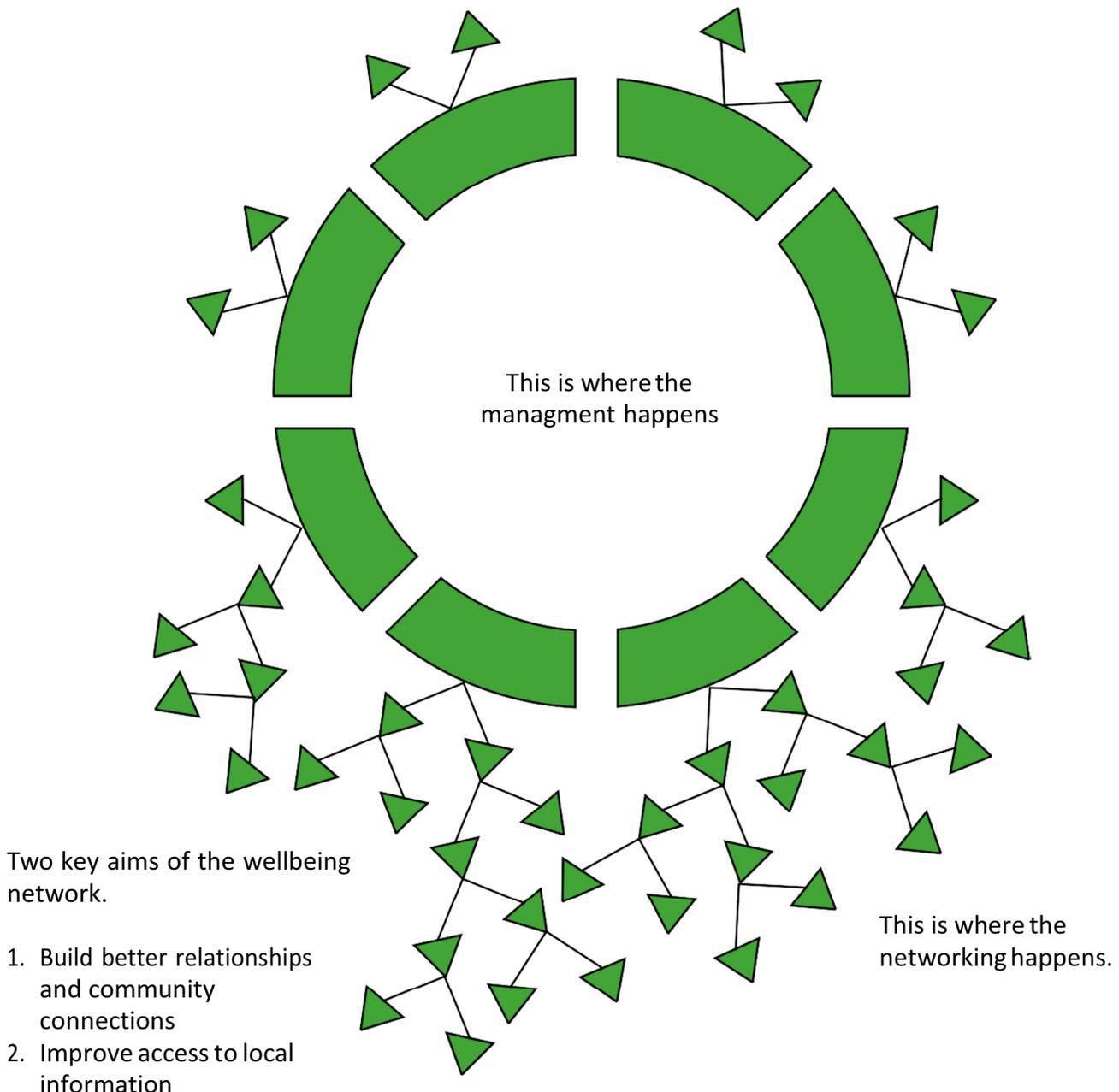
### Threats

- y Being a small voice in a big pond (NHS)
- y Service cuts
- y Apathy/ fear in local community
- y Insular neighbourhood
- y Community resistance to change/interference

## D. Clarifying the role of the 'Stakeholder'

Another useful exercise is to help clarify what motive the stakeholders have for their involvement. This diagram is useful to get people to understand that the networking element of the project happens in the stakeholder's domain and generally this will give them the pay-off or reward for their involvement.

Newington Wellbeing Network:  
Managed by a multi-stakeholder partnership group  
who make and implement decisions together.



One of the exercises you can do to help stakeholders establish their position (and their reward for involvement) is to engage in the following exercise. Ask members to individually answer the following questions and then share them in the group. A non-threatening way to do this is to throw the answers into a container and then each pick one out – that way responses remain anonymous and people can be as honest and open as they wish. Here's a template you can use.

# Questions for stakeholders

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Stakeholder: 'Any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives' (Edward Freeman 'Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach')

Payoff: Profit or reward

What is my personal stake in the wellbeing network? What do I get from involvement?

1.
2.

What is my organisation's stake in the wellbeing network? How do they benefit?

1.
2.

What do I/my organisation bring to the wellbeing network?

1.
2.
3.

E. Finding out who is good at what and who needs more support

Carrying out a skills assessment with your group is a way of not only identifying individual strengths but also finding out where there may be support or training needs. For example the skills assessment in Newington showed that people were not comfortable with IT and lacked knowledge of creating posters, leaflets etc. This led to some training in Desk Top Publishing being set up for the group. A sample skills assessment template is below:

Skills Assessment

Name.....

Date.....

Please tick box a) if you feel confident in the area and willing to use your skills in this project and box b) if you feel that you would benefit from some training or guidance/support to do it

	A	B		A	B
Chairing meetings			Form filling		
Taking minutes/recording			Translation		
Organising events			Catering		
Liaison with otherbodies			Local knowledge		
Arranging meetings			Communication skills		
Administration/office skills			Delivering leaflets		
Letter writing			Public Relations/Media		
Computer skills – what?			Positive Thinking		
Design/Graphics/Art			Practical skills		
Giving presentations			Facilitation skills		
Driving			Action planning/strategy		

## 7. Sample vision event outline

TIME	ACTIVITY	AIM	ROOM LAYOUT/ MATERIALS	LEADER
9.30–10.00	Arrivals and sign in.	Health and Safety Record <i>keeping</i>	Table at door Programme	Paul/BB/ Mary
10.00 – 10.15	Welcome and introduction to the event, including outline of DDN pilot project	Housekeeping Getting comfortable Information giving Setting the scene	Refreshments  Upbeat music Displays	Sheree
10.15 – 10.20	<b>POEM</b> : A Movement	Uplift/ Inspire/ Empower	Sit at tables	Marie
10.20 – 10.45	Start session by reflecting on the Poem by Marie  <b>Symbolic visioning – What does a good life mean for you?</b>  “If you woke up tomorrow and a small miracle had happened in your life, what changes would support your wellbeing. What changes would give a good life?”	Does NOT need art skills!  Allows Inclusive participation.  Non-threatening activity.  Stimulates imagination.  Thinking outside the box.  <i>Encourages creativity.</i>	Flip chart paper  Felt tip pens  Crayons,glitteretc  Upbeat music on low in background – CD player.	ΩFacilitators: Steph Cara Lorna BB Marie  LEADER: Sheree
10.45 – 11.10	FEEDBACK TO GROUP  Each table describes their VISION OF A GOOD LIFE with a ‘show and tell’	Builds  consensus  Empowers  Inspires	Music off  Papers to be put up on wall – Blu Tac  Take photos! Keep papers for Co- Design group	ALL
BREAK 11.10–11.30				
11.35 – 11.55	<b>STORY:</b> The Rainbow What are the themes of this story? What does it mean for us?	THOUGHTS/DISCUSS	Back at tables BUT different seats	Steph
12.00 – 12.45	How do we work together to give people a good life? What needs to happen? What skills and experience do we have in our midst? Who brings what?	Move people to different tables (shifts energy) Write up on large sheets of paper on tables  Get names and details where possible	Papers to be put up on wall – Blu Tac Take photos!  Keep papers for steering group to work with	Facilitators: Lorna Cara Steph BB Marie
12.45–1.10	TABLES FEED BACK TO GROUP & final thoughts from all participants. Goodbye and THANK YOU		Make sure people leave with contact details	Sheree

As you can see the event pulled on the skills and experience of group members to play their part. After the event the information was collated into a final report that was distributed to all contributors – a very important part of the process. All too often people are invited to events and consultations like these but never get to hear the results

**'A Movement' by Sally J Timmel**  
**(this poem was used at the visioning event to inspire people)**

A Movement  
Is dance  
poetry  
music  
which follows no metric  
yet can be precise in capturing reality.

It awakens our soul  
our inner courage  
our reason for being.

It calls us to the Cry  
Demanding our every passion  
tearing down statues built on images of men  
coming to a kaleidoscope of possibilities which finds a new path  
In search of the Wild Geese.

It beckons us to be released  
defying norms  
making us laugh at ourselves and  
cry at our fragility.

It asks us to be an Irregular Verb.

It commands us to discipline  
Calling us to be at our stations alert,  
tapping our energy and creativity,  
while we willingly give  
our suffering and defeat  
our joy and laughter  
to the Unknown.

Yet it is like the leaf  
falling from a tree  
caressing us with tenderness.

We are called to  
Dance at the sea  
Dream on the desert and  
Sing on the mountains,  
So that we can discover ourselves  
in a New World  
which crumbles old realities  
and refuses to be Named.

It is a battle cry  
yet a song.  
Our way of mixing heaven and earth.

## 8. Engagement checklist

### NWN Resident Engagement Plan – Checklist

TYPE OF ENGAGEMENT	TASKS	LEAD MG MEMBER	COMPLETE BY
Door-knocking and neighbourhood conversations	Door to door invitations/discussions		
Leaflets	Create leaflet/poster Leaflet appropriate areas		
Articles in local papers and magazines	Small article for church magazines etc Press release for local press		
Social media	Post on relevant Facebook pages Send out Tweets Texts by organisations		
Have an information stall outside SPAR/Tesco	Contact their management to arrange		
Stalls at community events to recruit and inform	Which events?		
Posters	Distribute posters across the ward noticeboards Distribute to shops, GP surgery etc		
Making use of local businesses	Use contacts list for local businesses Email/phone/visit businesses to request sponsorship and share		
Using local radio	Arrange to go onto Thanet Community Radio/ Academy FM/Radio Kent		
Talks to community groups & organisations	Give talks to promote NWN and recruit volunteers		
What's Happening Events	Host needs to take a lead, delegate tasks, use engagement checklist to plan the event		

## 9. Sample leaflets



**Newington Wellbeing Network**

**Newington Wellbeing Network**

Connecting the people and organisations of Newington, to improve communication, increase wellbeing and reduce isolation.

### What's happening In Newington?

**Want to feel more connected with people in your area?**

At our events you can meet people of all ages from your local community and find out what is going on in Newington

**Thursday 20th April, 12.30 - 1.30 pm at  
Newington Community Centre  
Princess Margaret Avenue CT12 6HX**

**Thursday 11th May, 12 - 1pm at Newington Free Church  
St John's Ave, CT12 6JD**

Information about  
Local groups & leisure activities ~ Newington Community Centre  
NHS Community Health Services ~ Newington Big Local  
Newington Children's Centre ~ Job and Career Training  
Copperfields ~ RAMLETS ~ Local Churches

**All ages welcome. Children's activities available.**

For more information: Lynda 07816 947626 or Marie 01843 607079

 @NewingtonWN

 Find us on Facebook





Check our calendar for more groups and events in Newington: <http://eventsPAY.uk>

## Newington Wellbeing Network Can You Help Us?

We need **volunteer residents** who would be willing to share news about local activities with their neighbours. This could mean occasional leafleting, distributing posters or letting people know about events and activities in the area.



Full support and training will be given. This is a great opportunity to be involved in making Newington an even better place to live and grow up in. We just need a couple of hours of your time each month. If you can help then please contact:

**Sheree 07919 493 297 or Lynda on 07816 947 626**

[newingtonwellbeingnetwork@mail.com](mailto:newingtonwellbeingnetwork@mail.com)

 Newington Wellbeing Network

## Newington Wellbeing Network



Connecting the people and organisations of Newington, to improve communication, increase wellbeing and reduce isolation

Invites you to a meeting at Newington Free Church on Thursday 21st July  
7pm until 9pm

If you'd like to contribute towards giving people a better life in Newington Ward then please come along and join us. Hear about this new project that supports everyone in our community!

For further information please call Lynda on 07816 947 626

Sorry we missed you if you were not at home when we called ... Please come!









Come along and tell us ...

*What does a good life look like for you and your family?  
How do we all work together to improve Wellbeing for residents in Newington?*

Please join us for our vision event to explore these questions on:  
**January 8th at Newington Community Centre**  
**9.30am - 2.00pm**  
**Free Lunch included**

To find out more and to let us know if you can make it please contact Lorna on 07584605739

We'd love to meet you if you are a resident of Newington Ward or work here in a paid or unpaid role or are simply interested in improving lives in this area

 NEWINGTON VISION EVENTS

## Last words

### **Anthony March, Partnerships Manager, Job Centre Plus**

DWP have been part of the NWN since October 2016 and attend the What's Happening in Newington events within the community to provide training opportunities that our work coaches can refer people to. By attending these events it also gives local residents direct access to DWP and questions they may have around Welfare Reform and Universal Credit Full Service that is being phased in across the UK.

To date residents have taken information at the events about training available and the call to action is for them to see their local work coach in the Jobcentre to discuss the type of training they are interested in. We will continue to offer the services of DWP at these events for questions and to offer training as a way of improving skills to move closer to the labour market.

### **Rachael Salvesen, Manager, Copperfields**

I joined the Newington Wellbeing Network last year following the opening of the Extra Care Housing Scheme that I manage. I was new to the Newington area and therefore not very aware of what was available in the area to promote to my residents. Also I wanted my building to act as a community resource for the local area. Prior to my scheme opening I visited potential residents in their homes many of whom lived on the Newington Estate and felt very isolated. Very few of the people I visited seemed to know what regular events were open to them in the area. By joining the Management Group, I met new partners with links to the local area and we were able to share information between ourselves. We now run monthly Information sessions at a different venue each month to inform residents of what is available. The footfall to the events has been slow but steady and word is gradually getting around. We have been able to help people who attended. For example I now have a volunteer who came via an Information Session run by one of my partners. We meet every two weeks and it has been a huge learning curve but a lot of fun and some lovely friendships have been formed.

### **Lynda Dawkins, Newington Free Church**

I have gained confidence in pushing my boundaries. Who would have thought that I would

speak on radio about our group's wishes for the Newington Ward. And I even led a public meeting! Being involved in the project gives our church better in-roads into the community and being involved means we are having a positive impact on people's lives and we may even get a few new members. We have lots of activities going on at the church and it would be good to see more people coming along. So come on all residents, join us and make us known throughout Thanet, Kent and even England!

### **Lorna Willis, NHS Health Trainer**

I have enjoyed being part of a team that has helped to develop, nurture and grow a project from the very beginning. I have increased in confidence and have pushed my boundaries, developing my skills and self-belief. It has been really important to me as a Public Health Champion and a Health Trainer to work at grass roots level and develop a project with the people's need right at its heart.

### **John Hall, Chair RAMLETS**

I joined the Newington Wellbeing Network in the hope that the local LETS (Local Exchange and Trading System) scheme, RAMLETS, could help to achieve the aims of the network to bring residents closer together and engaged in activities together. I moved to Ramsgate three years ago from Kingston upon Thames where the LETS scheme and associated groups have spawned movements such as the Kingston Pound, OneNorbiton, The Permaculture Garden, Transition Town Kingston and many other groups which have made the area a more cohesive and engaged place. My hope and expectation is that Newington Wellbeing Network will act as a catalyst for a similar development in Newington and Ramsgate in general. LETS schemes are well suited for getting people in an area involved with each other. Volunteers can be rewarded for their assistance and by having credits to their name they are then encouraged to spend them in the community, thus drawing more people into the scheme. My hope is that the monthly "Whats Happening" meetings will also become a monthly social for RAMLETS, where people can get to know what their neighbours are doing and what they want or can offer, and also have a few refreshments with conversations. In the long run I envisage movements such as NWN leading to the development of the "Thanet Pound" where residents of Thanet will have a local currency to ensure money spend in the area stays in the area,

with local businesses creating products to be used in the local area rather than disappearing off to corporate headquarters in London or abroad.

### **Sheree Bell, KCC Community Support**

Every fortnight for the past 19 months, members who live and work in the Newington community have come together to plan and implement what is now known as the Newington Wellbeing Network. That is a huge commitment and I have watched the project grow from an idea about supporting vulnerable and isolated people to a fully functioning Management Group who roll out a programme of local information-sharing events and are on the cusp of becoming a constituted group. I have seen them explore their ideas and come up with a design for low level social care support. I have seen them invite the community to a public meeting to tell people about the project. I have seen individuals grow and learn. I have seen volunteers come on board and I have seen the growth of a Local Exchange and Trading System. I have seen businesses being impressed and offering sponsorship. I have seen connections being made that help people feel less lonely. The ongoing challenge is to get more local people involved and be able to really connect people in meaningful ways.

It's been a challenge and a delight working on this project – group dynamics can be testing and working in co-production means everything goes at a slower pace. People have come and people have gone and that is the nature of working in Community Development.

However I have high hopes for its growth and development and everyone involved can see the potential for this model to be rolled out in practically any community. In that way it truly will leave a legacy.

### **Acknowledgements**

Newington Wellbeing Network has been founded on a lot of goodwill and generosity. We would like to thank everyone who has helped to build it and contributed to its success:

West Kent Housing Association and KCC at Copperfields supported housing  
Newington Community Centre  
Newington Free Church  
Newington Big Local  
Developing a Wellbeing Network

Thanet Job Centre Plus  
Kent Community Health Foundation Trust  
Newington Children's Centre  
St Christopher's Church  
Ageless Thanet  
RAMLETS  
Business Computer Solutions  
Minnitron  
And of course our lovely community volunteers

**Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.**

– Margaret Meade



This document is available in alternative formats and can be explained in a range of languages.