

# Community Hubs

How to set up, run and sustain a community hub to transform local service provision

# Our Place

- This presentation has been developed as part of the [Our Place programme](#) which ran from 2014 to 2016
- The Our Place programme was funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and delivered by [Locality](#) and partners. While funding for the programme is no longer available, the Our Place approach and learning from partnership areas is still a valuable one
- Our Place puts communities at the heart of service delivery in their area and involves local partners within a neighbourhood coming together with local people to identify and work on the issues that matter most to them.

# Community Hubs

This presentation contains:

- An overview of Community Hubs
- What they are and the benefits they bring
- Examples of hubs in practice
- Tips for setting up and sustaining community hubs.

# Community Hubs

- This presentation is aimed at anyone interested in developing or supporting community hubs in their neighbourhood
- Whether you are a local resident, a community group or a local authority officer, this presentation provides an overview of the ways in which community hubs can support communities through neighbourhood focussed services.

# Hubs and service transformation

- Community hubs can provide a means for alternative approaches to **service delivery** underpinned by the principles of **community involvement** and **partnership**
- Community hubs can facilitate this by providing a place where different local partners in a **neighbourhood** can come together and address the issues that matter most to them
- Community hubs can therefore support a neighbourhood focussed **community-led approach**.

# Our Place and Community Hubs

- 15% of Our Place areas (27/185 areas) focussed on service provision from community hubs. The 2015/16 programme saw a sharp increase in community hub service provision (25%) in comparison to 2014/15 (8%)
- Our Place community hubs looked to either deliver a range of service themes from the hub e.g. health, employability or to deliver services focussed on a specific theme e.g. family services, elderly, mental health
- Our Place areas focussed on hubs mapped existing service provision, consulted widely with local people and engaged with local commissioners to identify services which could be delivered through the hubs.

# What is a Community Hub?



# What is a community hub?

- Community hubs most commonly operate out of buildings, from which multi-purpose, community-led services are delivered
- Community hubs often host other partners and access to public services. These **co-location** approaches are an efficient and effective use of resources
- Community hubs are in themselves a good use of local assets, and the model can help to underpin an enterprising and resilient community organisation.



# Community-led

- Community hubs provide services for the community, but also by the **community**. Local people are involved both in making **decisions** about how services are run, how buildings are managed, and also **supporting** delivery through **volunteering**
- Typically, community hubs are run and managed by a dedicated **community organisation**, but in other instances they may be owned or managed by a public agency such as a **housing association**, or **local authority** but with substantial input and influence from the community.

# Multi-purpose

Community hubs are **multi purpose**, providing or hosting a range of **activities** and **services** used by lots of different people. The range of services reflect **local need**, and may be delivered by local people, other organisations, or public agencies.

Examples:

- Parent and toddler groups
- Health and wellbeing activities
- Employment support
- Childcare
- Library services
- Advice and information.

# Making use of local assets

- Community hubs utilise local buildings and land to provide a base for activities and services. These can be assets acquired through a **Community Asset Transfer** e.g. an old school, town hall or sports ground
- Other hubs are created as the result of new development through community led building projects.

# Enterprising and resilient

Community hubs need an **income** to be **sustainable**, and ensure they will be there in years to come. A range of income sources is usually required to cover all of the costs for looking after the building, and running the activities, e.g. grants, donations, hiring out space, delivering contracts, etc. **Effective** community hubs make use of **good ideas** and **resources** within the community and are able to adapt to changing circumstances.

Find out more: [What is community enterprise?](#)



# Why are community hubs a good idea?



# Hubs help build cohesive more resilient communities

- Hubs can bring people together and help them form new relationships and support networks
- They can do this by enabling and hosting community-led activity
- To remain sustainable, hubs do not rely on a single source of funding.



# Community hubs can help provide better more integrated services

- They offer a local base for people to access services, making them more accessible and desirable
- They often provide early intervention services, helping people to solve problems before they escalate into bigger problems
- They can offer a safe place where people can come in for a coffee or training course, and access additional services needed such as debt advice, mental health services or counselling without stigma
- Community hubs can provide a more holistic approach to helping people with their problems. They often have an ‘open door’ policy and are able to help people access a range of services under one roof.

Find out more about [community led services](#).

# Community hubs can transform existing buildings

- Community organisations have transformed [underused buildings](#) or land into thriving hubs of activity, making neighbourhoods more resilient
- Many community hubs have been developed as new uses for much loved but neglected heritage buildings
- Find out more about the [transfer of heritage assets](#) into community use
- Yet more have emerged from [sports facilities](#) transferred to the community.



# Community hubs provide a focus for community led regeneration

- Community hubs often act as a catalyst to develop local projects, activities and businesses. They can provide a base for local jobs and services, helping to keep economic activity local
- Some community hubs have helped establish [neighbourhood plans](#), others have been developed as a result of them
- Some hubs act as an anchor for [community economic development](#).

# What does a community hub look like in practice?

Some examples of community hub projects involved in the Our Place Programme



# Case study: The Ameina Centre



# The Ameina Centre

Limbury ward is three miles north west of Luton. Luton is the 69th most deprived Local Authority area, (out of 326), with notable rates of adult unemployment. Limbury has a significant number of older people, all living in a confined area. The projection is that this demographic group will increase by 2030 which means that new ways of delivering and co-ordinating older people's services will be needed.

The Ameina Center based in Ambleside is an established Social Enterprise, trading for three years now. It has four directors: a retired Deputy Head Teacher, a teacher and a leading community representative, a social worker and an ICT consultant.

The organisation's two main objectives are:

- To provide educational and behaviour support to young people and their families who are excluded from mainstream education
- To provide a safe home school environment to young people who are in care.

The Centre delivers the organisation's number 1 priority as outlined above, but is keen to support local people in their wish to access more services from the Community Centre. Since 2013 the Ameina Centre has therefore provided a range of activities to the community and each activity has been well supported.



# The Ameina Centre

## Developing a Community Hub to support older people

As part of Ameina's ongoing vision to deliver services which local people want and need, extensive consultations were held with local people in 2014, and in 2015 to identify priorities for the centre. Services for older people was one of the key priorities identified, in particular:

- programmes to address social isolation
- adult social care services
- networks to support people with dementia
- health and wellbeing services
- social events and intergenerational activities.

Planned services will be co-produced with local people and a range of partners, including Adult Learning and Live Well who are already on board. Others, such as Aldwyck Housing and the local GP surgery have made an in principle commitment. The partnership and activities are therefore proceeding on the basis that the work will commence in April 2016 initially with Live Well, Adult Learning and the Ameina Centre and with referrals from Adult Social Care and Aldwyck Housing and via self-referrals, and that the partnership will further develop in 2016-17 as the benefits are seen.

Partners acknowledge there was often limited reach of their services in Ambleside, including a perceived need amongst these agencies to improve their care offer to older people: to undertake more preventative work, to bring in existing health services to Ambleside and to establish new leisure and nutrition based services in the local community.

# The Ameina Centre

## Impact

There are a number of expected outputs and outcomes from this work, to be delivered as part of a 5 year local project from April 2016. A few of the services planned for people aged 55 and over include:

- 50 health and fitness sessions for older people per year - regular health checks and access to GP Services and facilities to improve fitness and mobility
- 50 Nutrition and Leisure sessions per year - A weekly Luncheon Club providing nutritious meals at affordable prices and access to basic nutritional advice -reducing isolation
- 12 sessions per year providing a network for those with dementia and their carers
- A common Assessment process to enable partners to more fully understand and plan for local needs of the over 55's
- Up to 10 people over the age of 55 years per year eating healthier and understanding the basics of good nutrition
- Up to 40 people over 5 years engaging in social learning activities and feeling less socially isolated.

# Case study: Soho Victoria Friends & Neighbours



# Soho / Victoria Friends & Neighbours

Soho & Victoria ward is South East of Sandwell, part of the Smethwick 'town' area, West Midlands.

It is a densely populated residential area with a transient population. The ward suffers from high levels of deprivation, with areas within the ward falling within the top 1% most deprived in the country. The community is very vibrant and diverse with a wide range of ethnic groups (over 80% being non-white British).

The Friends and Neighbours Community Interest Company (CIC) came about as a result of a neighbourhood planning process. It is a young but ambitious organisation developing projects, initiatives and services with an employment, skills and health and wellbeing focus.

It has an active Board of 14 Directors that meets monthly. Membership is open to anyone who lives in the ward in addition to local agencies and people who work or volunteer in the area.



# Soho Friends & Neighbours

## The Hubs

Friends and Neighbours CIC currently have a lease on a community building, the Victoria Skills Centre. The centre has several meeting rooms of various sizes and a workshop that was used previously for car maintenance. This is regarded as the first of several hubs to be developed across the area.

There will be three specific types of Hubs:

- **Welcome** Hubs which specifically start with the intention of just connecting people through coffee mornings, drop-ins, knit and natter clubs.
- **Interest** Hubs will bring people together around specific issues such as sport and leisure, youth skills, jobs and training, community health.
- **Enterprise** Hubs will develop organically from welcome and interest hubs becoming enterprises when there is a viable business case to generate income and opportunities.

# Soho Friends & Neighbours - The Impact

The services provided from the Victoria Skills Centre include:

- Training, skills and enterprise development so that people can enter the local labour market/set up micro enterprises
- A 'befriending' service that matches an older or vulnerable resident to a trained community supporter who then provides bespoke support over time.

The aspiration is to develop capacity and opportunities for local residents to find real and lasting solutions to the challenges facing the community, i.e. reduced isolation for 450 residents; 500 people accessing employment advice and 3 new micro enterprises providing 50 people with apprenticeships/employment support (over a five year period).

# Case study: Levenshulme Inspire



# Levenshulme Inspire

Levenshulme is located four miles South East of Manchester city centre. The area is culturally and economically vibrant but it is also well known for relatively high levels of multiple deprivation.

Levenshulme Inspire is set up as a not for profit community enterprise. It is a dynamic partnership involving people committed to transforming the area through community activity, creativity, enterprise and fun.

The partnership seeks to raise the aspirations of the individual and unlock the potential of the community, from the very youngest to the very oldest, through providing holistic services and opportunities to create a better future.



The Inspire Centre is a community hub at the heart of Levenshulme which is open to everyone. It is a thriving and well-loved centre owned by the people of Levenshulme, and a place where people can meet, learn, work and have fun.

The Hub is the result of a sensitive redevelopment of the United Reformed Church funded from a number of sources: the Homes and Communities Agency, Big Lottery Fund, Great Places Housing Group, Manchester City Council and the United Reformed Church.

Costing nearly £3m, the result is an attractive glass-fronted building which houses the reception, café and community space on the ground floor, as well as a business centre on the first floor and apartments above.



# Levenshulme Inspire - The Impact

Inspire provides a number of support services and hosts a wide range of activities provided for the community, by the community.

By linking up with other agencies they have also helped vulnerable people with mental health needs with housing issues.

As part of the Our Place programme they have supported the development of an enterprise partnership with a vision to make the area a dynamic hub for business start-ups and local enterprise.

Through a co-ordinated approach to training, mentoring and networking activities they have supported local people back into employment and further training.

*(As funding opportunities are secured to implement Our Place priorities, preliminary findings will become available).*



# How can we set up a community hub?



# Hubs may be established in a range of ways

- Transfer of an asset to the community

Many community hubs start life as a publicly owned building that is transferred into community ownership when no longer required by the local authority. Old Schools, Town Halls, Libraries, Leisure Centres and Office buildings have all been re-purposed as community hubs.

- A new community led development

Some community hubs come about as the result of a purpose built development.

- The diversification of services

Some hubs begin life as a specialist building delivering a service, and diversify the range of activity they provide to become a community hub.





# 8 steps to establishing a community hub in your neighbourhood

# 8 Steps to Establishing a Community Hub



# 1. Understand local needs and demand

Every community hub is different, influenced by its founding members and the environment it exists within. Before a detailed plan for your hub can be established, you need to identify and understand the issues which matter most to local people in your community.

Useful activities to undertake are:

- [Listening](#) to local residents' issues. A community hub must be **grounded** in a real understanding of local needs.
- Reviewing available information about your community including existing strategies or plans - contact your local authority or have a look on their website.

# 1. Understand local needs and demand (contd.)

- Have a look at statistics about your area, e.g. [deprivation maps](#), to understand what the priorities and trends are locally.
- [Mapping existing community assets](#) their functions and characteristics in order to understand the local provision.
- Developing a [community engagement plan](#) setting out how you will continue to involve others as your vision moves forward.





## 2. Establish a clear vision and mission *with your community*

A clear vision and mission helps to provide a clear purpose to your hub, helping to articulate and communicate what you are seeking to achieve. This will help you to remain focussed, and engage with people more effectively.

Try this guide for [developing a vision and mission](#), but remember to involve your community in the process.



## 2. Establish a clear vision and mission *with your community* (contd.)

Community engagement is an ongoing requirement for an effective community hub. Once a vision and mission have been shaped by them, a useful next step is to gather and consider ideas for activities and projects that will help you to achieve them.

This is about implementing the community engagement plan you have developed, it may involve:

- Knocking on doors
- Sending our surveys
- Use of social media, [online tools](#), and [creative consultation](#)
- Public meetings
- Learning from others through visits or “[knowledge and skills exchanges](#)”.

# 3. Develop partnerships, and build relationships

The most effective hubs develop strong networks within their communities, and beyond, underpinned by shared values and buy-in to the vision. Useful activities to undertake are:

- A [stakeholder mapping](#) exercise to focus your communications
- Talk to local community leaders, councillors, officers and public agencies about what you want to do
- Where possible identify where you have common causes. Think ‘what are their priorities, what can we offer them, how does this help them with what they are trying to do?’
- Your research from Step 1 should help you here.

## 4. Develop your strategic objectives

- Develop a set of clear objectives that set out what you will actually do in order to achieve your mission. Your objectives should reflect community needs, as well as local context, focussing on the areas that will make the most difference
- The aim is to not develop a huge list of everything that you will do, but develop agreement of the key strategic priorities for the time being. Your specific objectives may be reviewed in time.



# 5. Develop a business model for your hub

- Community Hubs can only be effective if they are sustainable and resilient. Whilst grant funding may be hugely important in helping hubs get going, over-reliance on grants will make your community hub vulnerable
- Community hubs often have quite complex business models, relying on a range of income sources to cover their costs
- Try Locality's [building calculator](#) to understand the costs of running an existing building, or the [community buildings checker](#) if you are want to explore the feasibility of a new build hub
- Another useful resource to help business planning for a hub is [To Have and to Hold](#).

## 6. Secure support and resources to make it happen

Successful hubs need to secure support from a wide range of people and organisations to be successful. This may include:

- Developing support from local authority officers and councillors
- Making effective proposals to funders
- Securing support from the local community to volunteer or get involved.

If you're seeking funding or investment, try checking your [investment readiness](#). Take a look at the [Raising Finance Kit](#).

Have a look at some examples of successful [community campaigns](#) in action.

# 7. Acquire any assets required

- Community hubs may be acquired through asset transfer, purchased directly, or built from scratch. Sometimes a trial period provides an opportunity for community groups to test things out before taking on the full responsibility of owning or managing a building or piece of land.
- A range of resources are available to help communities develop their asset based project. Take a look at the asset transfer [legal toolkit](#) for advice on the legal issues involved.

## 8. Establish an appropriate governance structure

- Before formally taking over the management of a building, employing any staff, or securing funding, an organisation will need to be formally set up
- For further guidance on what type of structure may be appropriate have a look at this guide on [choosing a legal structure](#).







# Sustaining your community hub



# Check your governance

Community hubs should regularly undertake reviews to make sure that they are working effectively. Useful exercises to keep in good shape include:

- Try a self assessment health check tool to identify your strengths and weaknesses, such as the [early warning guide](#) or [community enterprise checker](#)
- Review your strategic plan and business plan at regular intervals
- Capture information and monitor the impact that your hub is making on people and your community. Have a look at the [inspiring impact hub](#) for ideas
- Review your community engagement methods to keep them fresh and fit for purpose as local needs might change over time.

# Diversify your income to develop resilience

Over-reliance on one or two sources of income is a common cause of organisational failure. Seek to establish a range of income sources so that you are less vulnerable or dependent.

- Grant
- Contracts and service delivery
- Trading income
- Asset based income.

# Keep an eye out for grants

Whilst grants are not a sustainable source of ongoing income, they can be very helpful for start up projects, or piloting projects.

- Have a look here for help [finding funds](#)
- A useful place to look for grants is [Funding Central](#).

# Service contracts

Talk to local agencies about opportunities to deliver services that are in line with your objectives as an organisation.

The bar is generally set higher for organisations wishing to secure and deliver public service contracts compared with grants, so it helps to invest some time in becoming [contract ready](#) if you are seeking to establish this as an income stream.

As community hubs often operate at a local level, they sometimes need to collaborate with others in order to compete to deliver service contracts by [building bidding consortia](#).

# Trading income

Community hubs can often develop locally rooted social enterprises that support their aims, and help cover costs.

Trading income may come from selling services such as childcare, or gym membership, or, through the sale of products whether it is arts and crafts, locally made produce or a pint of ale!

Have a look at some [case studies](#) from the Locality membership, and examples from the [Power to Change](#) programme.

For more information on community run shops, pubs, markets, cafes and bakeries have a look at the [Plunkett Foundation resources](#).



# Asset based income

Community hubs often generate income from rent, room hire and license agreements.

This can work particularly well where the tenants complement the social objectives of the organisation.

For example, public agencies sometimes rent space in hubs so that they can provide services at a neighbourhood level such as housing advice surgeries, or health screening services.

# Adapt to changing needs and environment

Sustainable community hubs remain alive to and responsive to the changing needs and demands within the community. It is good practice for all community organisations to undertake a regular review. This may involve looking at customer feedback, statistics and impacts to date.

It is also helpful to be keyed into local networks, e.g. Resident's Associations or the local Council for Voluntary Services, in order to be up to date regarding new funding or learning opportunities locally.

# Maintaining quality services and assets

Consider how your organisation and hub will manage the quality of its activity.

- A range of resources are available for organisations to consider quality issues
- [Visible Communities](#) is tailored to organisations managing community buildings
- [PQASSO](#) is another example of a quality standard tailored to third sector organisations
- Other hubs may be more suited to industry specific quality standards, depending on the focus of work such as [Care Quality Commission](#) standards, [OFSTED](#), or Matrix Standard
- Other hubs develop their own internal processes for ensuring quality services.

# Demonstrating impact and social value

- Understanding, and being able to prove the difference your hub makes to individuals, the wider community and other stakeholders will help you to maintain support, and secure funding and resources
- Community hubs should develop an understanding about what they are trying to achieve, why, and how they will [demonstrate the impact](#) they make
- Useful resources to help consider your impact include the [Inspiring Impact Hub](#), and the [Good Finance Guide](#) to social impact.

# Maintaining relationships

Stakeholder management and community engagement require ongoing attention, and time and resources.

More established organisations may wish to adopt a formal 'Customer Relationship Management' tool, and use suitable software to help keep track of your engagement with your stakeholders.





Where can we get help and support?

# Sources of support for community hubs

MyCommunity helps communities take control over their neighbourhood through advice, direct support and grants [www.mycommunity.org.uk](http://www.mycommunity.org.uk).

Locality is the national network of ambitious and enterprising community-led organisations, working together to help neighbourhoods thrive [locality.org.uk](http://locality.org.uk) .

# My Community



[mycommunity.org.uk](https://mycommunity.org.uk)



@mycommunityhelp

#mycommunityhelp



My Community Rights