



Be brave

Building Community Led Initiatives
in North Manchester



Winning
Hearts and
Minds



The Winning Hearts and Minds programme epitomises the ambition that we have across Manchester, to improve the lives of our residents and build on the many strengths of our great city.

This approach to tackling health inequalities has made a real difference to people, and supported the efforts of residents and community groups in North Manchester.

As we come out of the Omicron wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the time is now right to refocus again and address the fact that we have been hit harder by the pandemic and we need to take corrective action now.

Therefore, I am really pleased to see that Winning Hearts and Minds will be one of the flagship programmes of our Population Health Recovery Plan. I am also delighted to see that this programme will be integral to the Marmot work in North Manchester, alongside the plans to address the wider determinants of health.

Councillor Joanna Midgley

Deputy Leader with responsibility
for Health and Care

The background is a solid teal color. It is decorated with various colorful geometric shapes and symbols scattered throughout. These include orange and yellow squares, circles, and stars; red hearts and asterisks; white circles and stars; and orange and yellow plus signs and arrows. The shapes are of various sizes and orientations, creating a festive and dynamic pattern.

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Foreword

Community Led Initiatives is the cornerstone project of Manchester's Winning Hearts and Minds programme.

This report describes work that has taken place with and in communities in North Manchester over the past couple of years; the progress that has been made in building relationships and forging new ways of working; and the learning that will inform the next steps for the programme.

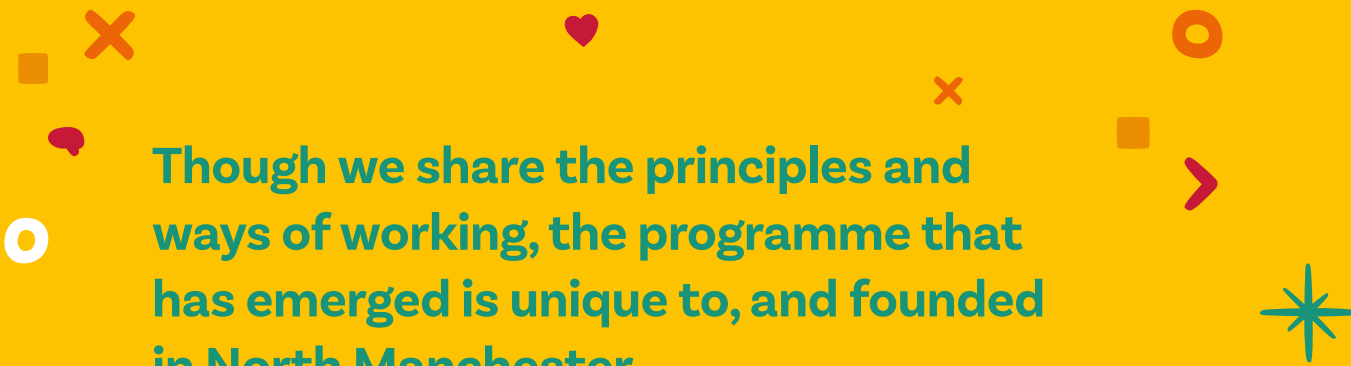
Before we get into that story, I want to thank the leadership of Manchester Health and Care Commissioning (a partnership between NHS Manchester Clinical Commissioning Group and Manchester City Council) for being brave, taking a risk, and investing resources in this approach.

Although inspired by a global evidence base of similar initiatives, from North Karelia in Finland to Cambridge in New Zealand, and more local examples in Cornwall, Bromley by Bow and

Wigan; we were still essentially asking to invest resources in an approach to improving health that couldn't be as clearly defined at the outset in the way the delivery of health services can.

This was a challenge. The support from our leadership, symbolises the ethos of the Winning Hearts and Minds approach and the principles that we share with those initiatives that informed our thinking.





Though we share the principles and ways of working, the programme that has emerged is unique to, and founded in North Manchester.



Back in 2017, Manchester's three Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) were about to become one. The leadership of North Manchester CCG, where I was based at the time, were keen to leave a population health legacy for the area that could transform the longstanding poor outcomes for the people of North Manchester. Despite the years of passion and hard-work to start initiatives, invest and make improvements for North Manchester across public, statutory and voluntary sector services; local people said they thought that their needs and desires for the area had been neglected in favour of other parts of the city. There was a mismatch between the hard work and the progress the city was seeing and the experiences and health outcomes for communities in North Manchester. One of the things that hit me, from the early conversations with local groups and residents, was the lack of trust they had in authorities, a lack of hope and a sense of acceptance with their lot in life.

Yet in the thick of that, if you looked just a little bit deeper, there was an energy, creativity, and collective good will. At a system level, there were also opportunities for transformation on the horizon such as the Victoria North development, and the new Local Care Organisation that promised to deliver care, in a more joined up way, that was closer to and made sense to communities.

Given that the most common unhealthy habits that contribute to heart disease are shared with the other top causes of death (as seen in the 3-4-50 framework), by just focussing on improving heart disease we would have an impact on Cancer, Lung Disease and Diabetes as well. So, we made that our ambition – to reduce preventable deaths from Heart Disease in North Manchester over 10 years, knowing that this would have a knock on impact on preventing deaths from other conditions and improving overall population health.



3-4-50 Framework developed by Oxford Health Alliance

But we've been trying to get people to smoke less, move more and eat healthily for years – what difference could we make? Especially in an area of social disadvantage where making a life change is so much more difficult?

This is where the Winning Hearts and Minds approach came in. Rather than trying to get people to smoke less, move more and eat healthily, what if we got to know them, understand their lifestyles, listen to what was important to them and came alongside them to make changes that impacted their communities in a positive way?

There was so much energy, creativity and good will within communities, despite their challenging life-circumstances, surely a more strengths based approach could work?

So, we learnt what we could from the evidence base of inspiring initiatives that went before us, and invested in Community Led Initiatives for North Manchester.

And then came COVID-19. Our fear is that the pandemic will have made existing health inequalities even worse, and more intractable than they were before. Yet when you read this report, the connections and relationship-based ways of working that the crisis enabled, might just offer a glimmer of hope.

The ambition for Winning Hearts and Minds remains, though the route to achieving it won't be exactly what we planned or expected. As we start to recover, hopefully, from the worst of the pandemic we have an opportunity to build on everything we have learnt and make sure the most disadvantaged areas and communities in Manchester aren't left behind.

We don't yet have statistics and numbers showing an impact on heart disease from this work – this will take time and may take a little longer because of the pandemic.

But we do know that building trust and relationships and developing solutions with communities is the foundation needed to achieve our outcomes – and we have made progress on that. In time, and in combination with the other workstreams of the programme we should start to see the impact we are aiming for. Look out for the next report!

Dr Cordelle Ofori

Consultant in Public Health Medicine

Manchester's Population Health Team

Manchester City Council and Manchester Health and Care Commissioning





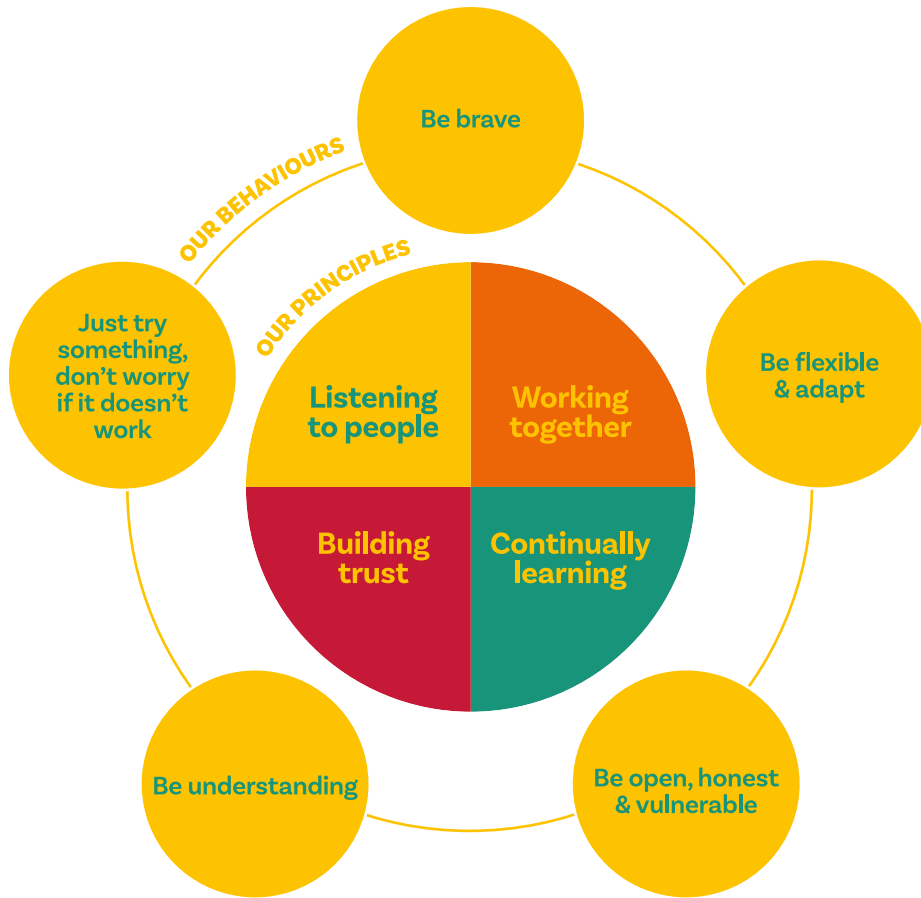
Executive Summary

The Community Led Initiatives workstream of the Winning Hearts and Minds (WHM) programme has been running for two years.

This report details experiences to date and tells stories of the impact of the programme.

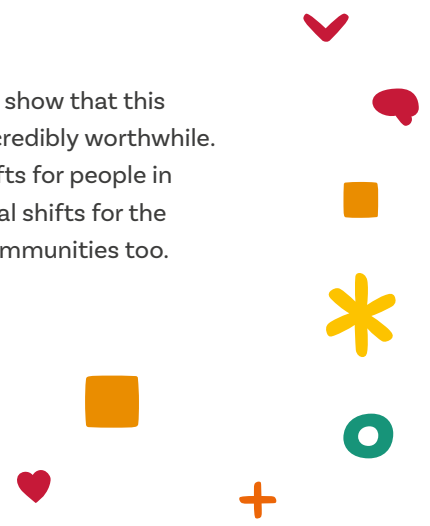
The programme emerged from the need to approach tackling health inequalities in a completely different way, using new methods grounded in an understanding of what makes communities healthy and well.

The work has informed our Winning Hearts and Minds Framework which details the essential principles and behaviours that are required to have the biggest impact on people's lives.



Doing things differently has also meant that we measure things differently too, and understand that impact is more than just counting numbers of people with a certain health condition.

The stories in this report show that this work isn't easy, but is incredibly worthwhile. There have been real shifts for people in our communities, and real shifts for the people working in our communities too.



“ It’s been great having you on board though, I know it’s been a short time but I don’t think you realise what you’ve been able to do. To have somebody that’s come along, that’s got what we’re about and wanted to help as well is a massive thing for us. Knowing that you understand and can see what we’re trying to do...You’re both so easy to talk to and to get along with... you’re both doing marvellous. ”

Sue Asprey
Chair of Trustees
The Chatterbox Project, Blackley



Introduction



Welcome to the latest report from the Winning Hearts and Minds programme!

It's a pretty long report, hopefully with more than a few things that'll pique your interest. It has been designed for you to be able to dip in and out of, whenever you get a chance, so take your time and explore some of the things we've been up to in the last two years.



What is Winning Hearts and Minds?

In 2018, data showed that Manchester had some of the poorest heart and mental health outcomes in England¹. Heart health statistics were particularly poor for residents in areas in the north of the city.

Our Population Health Plan described the three lifestyle behaviours (tobacco use, unhealthy diet and a sedentary lifestyle) that led to the four long-term health conditions (cardiovascular disease, cancer, respiratory disease and diabetes) that cause the large majority of preventable deaths and health inequalities.

We also knew things like where you live, your ethnicity, or your income, were having a huge impact on how healthy Manchester residents were. These health inequalities were only getting worse too, so we knew that we needed to do something completely different.

JARGON BUSTER

Health Inequalities: Avoidable, unfair difference in the health of different groups of people. This might be due to barriers to accessing healthcare, quality of care received, or social aspects such as quality of housing.

¹ <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/mortality-profile>

A whole load of people from across the city came together to think about what we could do, with partners like Manchester Health and Care Commissioning (MHCC), Manchester City Council (MCC), MCRactive, Manchester Local Care Organisation (MLCO) and many Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector representatives taking part too.

From these discussions, the Winning Hearts and Minds programme was born.

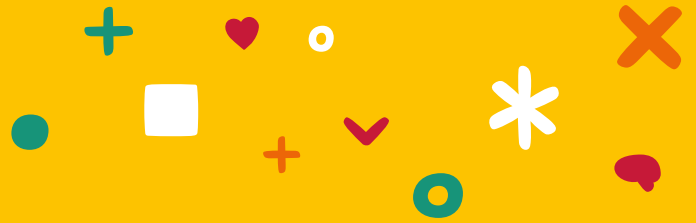
JARGON BUSTER

VCSE Sector: VCSE stands for Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise – any organisation, with social values, that is not run as a private company (for profit) or a public organisation (funded by taxes). Includes charities, community groups, faith groups, youth groups, and non-professional sports clubs, to name a few.

Five programme aims and four workstreams were identified to help us have an impact on heart and mental health in Manchester.

Programme aims

- 1** To improve the conditions that create health in the most socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods
- 2** To reduce levels of physical inactivity
- 3** To reduce the number of heart attacks, strokes and cardiovascular events
- 4** To improve the physical health of people with Severe and Enduring Mental Illness (SMI)
- 5** To strengthen connections, relationships and collective action for healthy lifestyles



Workstream 1

Workstream 2

Workstream 3

Workstream 4

Healthy
Hearts

Healthy
Minds

Healthy
Lifestyles

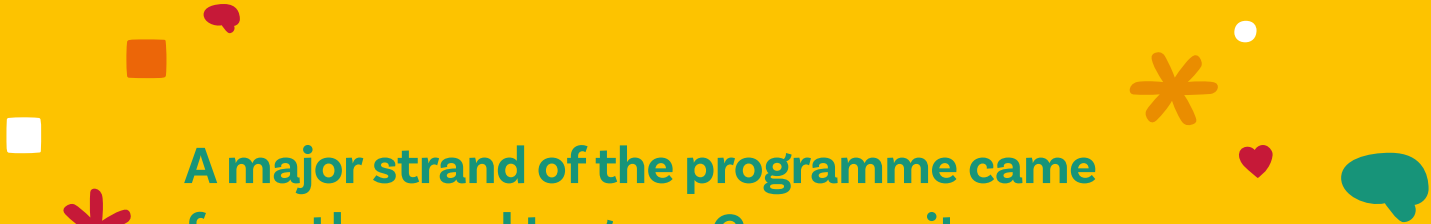
Community
Led Initiatives

JARGON BUSTER

Socially Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods: Areas that tend to have higher levels of negative wider social determinants of health. Often these can be caused through lack of infrastructure, lack of care, lack of funding, and oversights in system planning.

Cardiovascular Events: Any incident that causes damage to the heart muscle. Includes heart attacks, but can also include things such as irregular heartbeat and certain types of cancer.

Collective Action: Action taken by a group of people or a community, together, working towards a common goal.



A major strand of the programme came from the need to grow Community Led Initiatives, understanding that people know what makes them well and keeps them healthy, but they don't always have the support they need, personally or within their communities.

We started by starting a series of community conversations that took place over twelve months, and in 2019, a team of ten people were recruited to build on these conversations and create true Community Led Initiatives

to influence those wider social determinants that impact on people's health. This included eight Community Development Fieldworkers who would be embedded in small communities across North Manchester.



JARGON BUSTER

Wider Social Determinants (of health): Social, economic and environmental factors which impact on people's health. The 2010 Marmot Review was key in highlighting the link between these wider social determinants and people's health outcomes.

* WHAT ARE COMMUNITY LED INITIATIVES?

Community Led Initiatives (CLI) is an umbrella term for a few different types of community development work, including asset based community development, co-production, strengths-based etc. This approach understands that often, health inequalities have proved resistant to 'top down' approaches and that people in communities are capable experts-by-experience. A CLI approach is designed to change the relationship between those supported by services and those doing the supporting, with a focus on health promotion.

There is an increasingly robust evidence base that suggests that CLIs create and support the social capital, connectedness and control that lead to good health outcomes.

There is also a growing understanding of how wider social determinants impact health, and how the system needs to change to address this. For example, if we know that education and social care have an impact on health, then we need to work together to tackle those issues.

(Cahn, 2001; Ostrom, 1996; Putnam, 2000, Dougall et al, 2018, Marmot et al, 2010; Timmins, 2015)

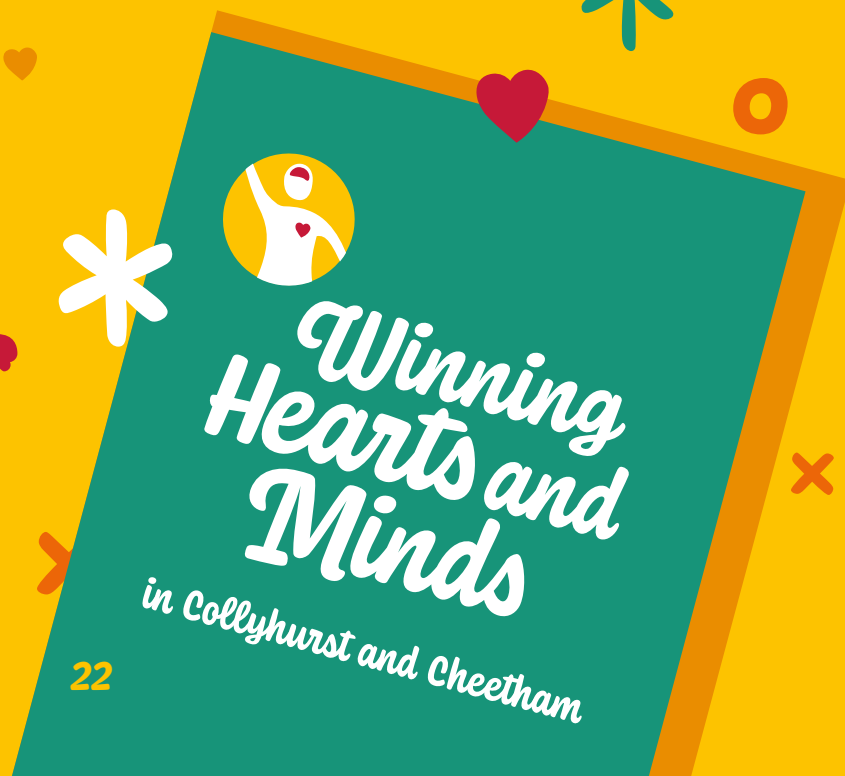
“Gaining insights and knowledge is easier when we can listen deeply and patiently to what really matters. Learning that siloed approaches cause confusion and slow progress. Organisations don't know what each other are doing, we don't know what they are doing – what chance do residents have?”

WHM Strategy Group
January 2019



Reflecting on the recommendations from the 'Winning Hearts and Minds in Collyhurst and Cheetham' report.

All these community conversations contributed to some recommendations that were set out in our initial report.



It was recommended that over the five years of the programme:

- There is ongoing recognition of the importance of listening
- There is continual reflection in relation to programme structures and a willingness to flex and adapt as necessary
- The WHM team continues to understand the importance of accountability
- The team is sensitive to the informal structures and leadership in the communities being connected with
- There is a deepening understanding of the diverse nature of a community's cultural and religious influence
- The work is iterative
- There is no space for complacency
- It is ok to think small
- The power of mentoring and coaching others to use this approach



JARGON BUSTER

Iterative: Work that will change and grow in the future, building on the learning gained while doing and reflecting on the work in the present.

When we started writing this new report we could see how these were still very relevant to our daily work, but after two years of exploring them more, we had a lot more to add.




The purpose of this report

We're at the midpoint of programme delivery, so it felt like a good time to collate our learning and share with you some stories from our communities, and how the ways of working are taking shape.

We'll tell you a bit about what we've been up to over the past two years – including how we dealt with the Covid-19 pandemic and how our work shifted as a result. We want to share the lessons we've learnt and stories about the people we've worked with in North Manchester.

We've also worked through the common threads that keep popping up, the things that we wouldn't be successful without, that have enabled us to have an impact on the people we're working with.



From these stories, and common threads, we've created a framework that captures our approach and the reasons it has worked.

We wanted to use this report to tell stories of our work, but when we started writing them, we just couldn't stop! We've summarised a few in this report, but in the coming months we'll be sharing much more, as so much of the magic in these stories is the little things that build into much bigger impact.


All of our work is emergent and evolving – this report is a snapshot in time – by the time you read this, we'll have likely already started on some new ideas, and changed our minds about some things we were 'certain' about last year.



JARGON BUSTER

Emergent: Work that can't be predicted in advance, and only becomes apparent during the process of starting the work – meaning writing a firm plan or strategy would offer little value.

For now, we're happy that this report captures our experiences working on Winning Hearts and Minds, and Community Led Initiatives over the last two years, and we're looking forward to using what we've learnt as we continue.



The Winning Hearts and Minds Framework



How to build Community Led Initiatives

In the early days of the programme, we were asked a lot if we were going to write a strategy for WHM, and it was something we really resisted, not wanting to impose our assumptions onto our work.

Instead, we listened, and we reflected, and, particularly for Community Led Initiatives, let communities decide its direction and shape.

Our newly developed framework is our first attempt at more formally describing the way that we work. It sets out our tried and tested approach that has so far helped us to have a positive impact on people and communities. In the spirit of Winning Hearts and Minds, we won't say that it's perfect, or that it won't change, but it has emerged from and is backed up by all of our work in communities to date.



Journey to the framework

Making space for regular 'check-ins' and reflection sessions with the whole team has been essential to growing our understanding of what we needed to do and the impact we were having.

This feedback was sometimes structured (e.g. the Liked, Lacked, Learned, Longed for activity) but often informal, as we shared stories and learning in team meetings, in passing at the office, or at neighbourhood events and meetings with partners.

The Four Ls

The 'Liked, Lacked, Learned, Longed for' activity is a creative facilitation technique used as a regular point of reflection with some structure to help us look back at and compare to earlier versions of the activity.

* JARGON BUSTER

Creative Facilitation Technique: Techniques or activities used by someone running a session, to explore or discuss a particular topic in a non-traditional or non-academic way. Often more fun or interesting than traditional techniques, and can draw out people's creativity to find solutions to situations.

At the start of each session, everyone is given four different coloured cards or post its, and are asked to write down as many things they can think of that fall into the categories of:

Liked

What have we liked and enjoyed?

Lacked

What seemed to be missing or could have been done better?

Learned

What have we learned from trying different things? What has interested us?

Longed for

What is something we wish existed or was possible to help us be more successful?

This activity has been undertaken regularly since January 2019, and we'll share snippets of insight as we go through the report.

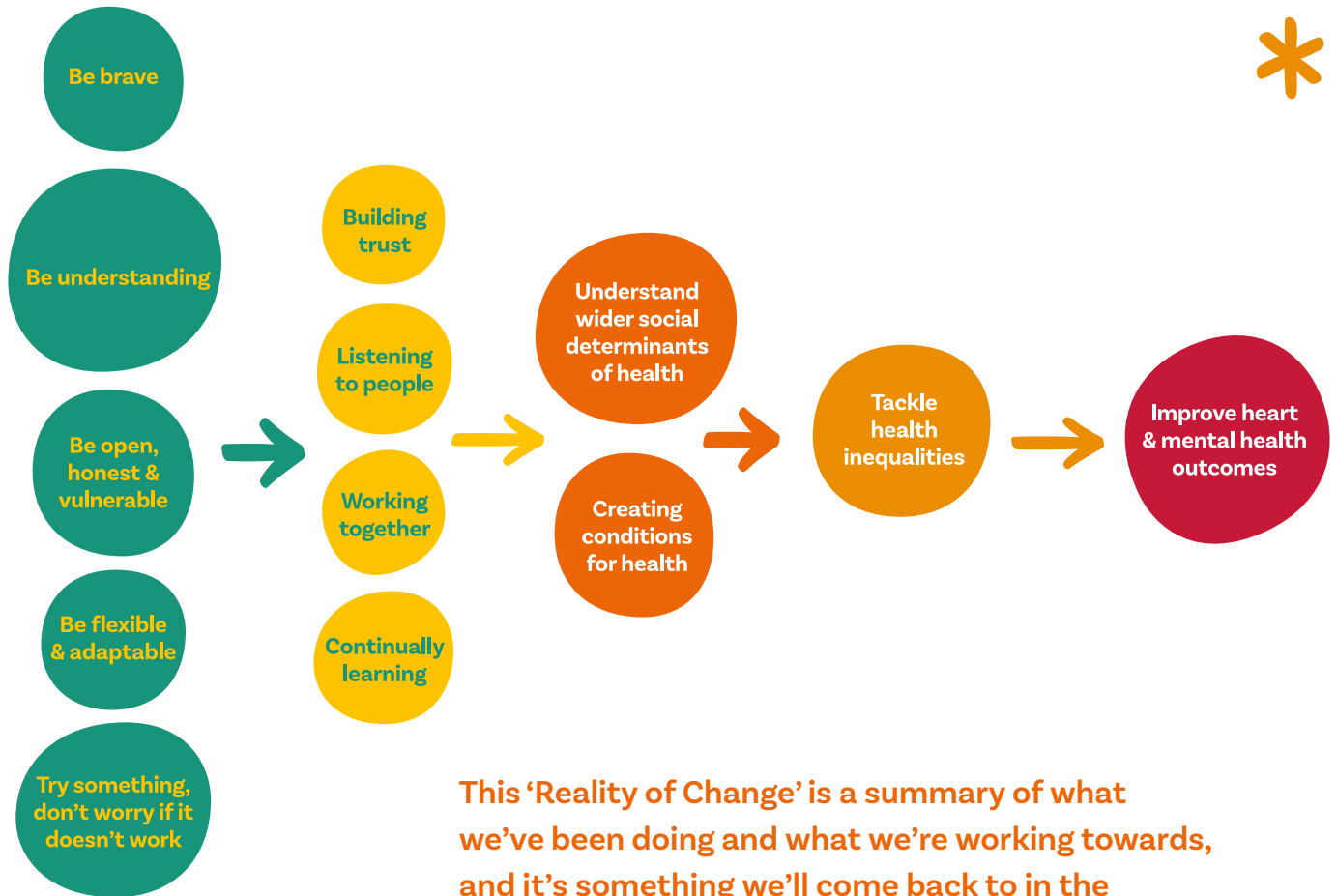
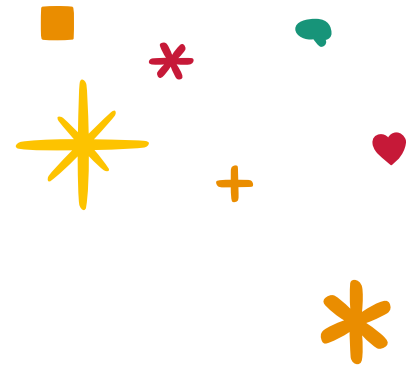
Trying to summarise two years of feedback and discussion for this report proved quite the challenge. Slowly but surely, as we sifted through all of the learning, certain themes kept appearing.

After a substantial amount of time staring at walls covered in post its, these themes found a home in something that closely resembled a traditional 'Theory of Change' – but it wasn't just a theory for us; it was grounded in the reality of what it takes to build a programme around Community Led Initiatives.

JARGON BUSTER

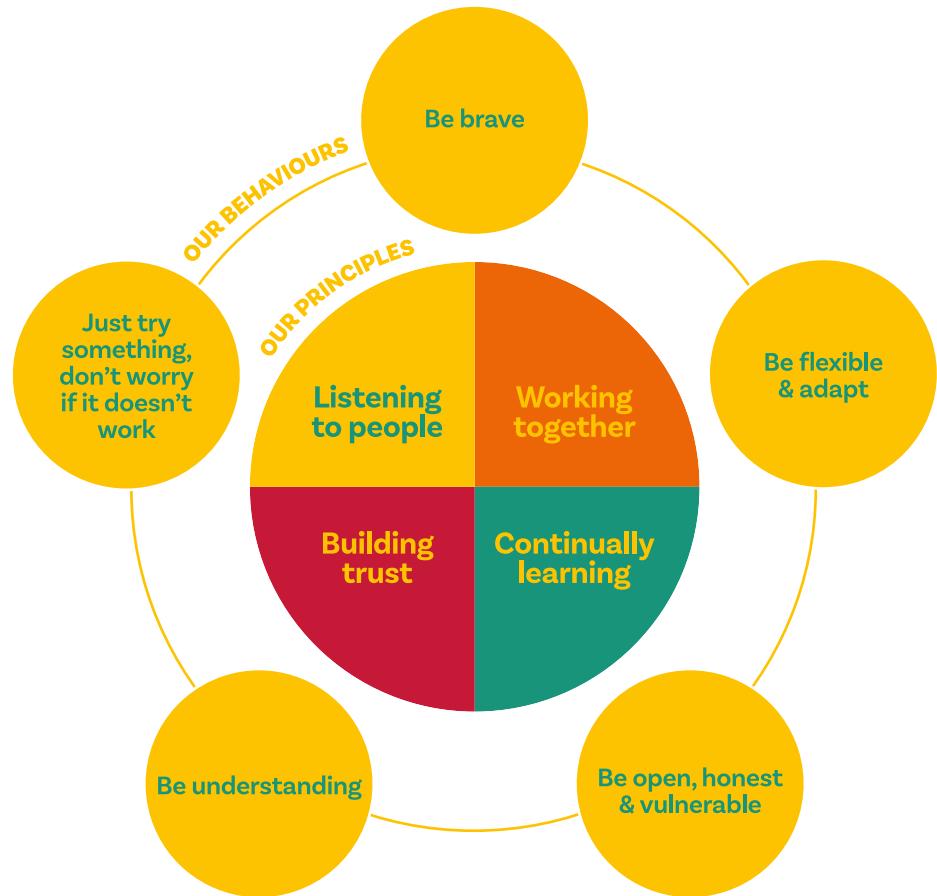
Theory of Change: A Theory of Change is a way of showing your long term goals, and works backward to help you decide what you need to do to get there. It's often used at the start of a project to help with planning

Our 'Reality of Change'



This 'Reality of Change' is a summary of what we've been doing and what we're working towards, and it's something we'll come back to in the future to review and to measure success against.

We also wanted to translate this into a practical tool that clearly shows what we're doing and how we're doing it, and so we created our *Winning Hearts and Minds Framework*:



The WHM Framework: Our principles

By underpinning all of our work with these five behaviours, we can summarise the behaviours with four principles of how we work:

Listening to people

Working together

Building trust

Continually learning

As we progress through this report, we'll keep referring to these principles, giving examples of how they all pop up across all of our work, and expand on why they've been so important to underpin what we do.

The WHM Framework: Our behaviours

While working on the project and reflecting on how we work, we have picked out five common behaviours we all share, that help us to achieve what we're doing.

Be brave

Consider new things that haven't been done before, talk to people who aren't the usual suspects, challenge the system, don't do things just because 'that's the way it's always been done'.

Just try something, don't worry if it doesn't work

Don't sit around talking about something for ages, just get out there and do it, don't be afraid of making mistakes or failing, we'll learn more from those experiences than if we'd done nothing.

Be open, honest and vulnerable

Share your experiences, bring your whole self to conversations, don't expect people to reveal everything about their lives to you without giving anything in return, working with people as equals.

Be flexible and adapt

Don't over plan and be ready to adjust those plans if things don't work out, and when things go really well – put some more energy in those places!

Be understanding

Come to new experiences with an open mind, don't make assumptions about people's lives, embrace complexity and put yourself in other people's shoes.



*Who
we are*



**This is what the Winning Hearts
and Minds team looked
like in early 2021.**





Matthew Youngson

Community Development Fieldworker
Collyhurst

What matters to me

Happiness matters to me in a big way. You can't always choose what type of day you have, but you can choose to smile regardless.

Why WHM matters to me

Working with people to build projects that they want in their community is a great privilege in life.

Best moment

Working in partnership with Whitley Road Medical Practice to reach out to people and support them through Covid.

Hardest moment

Starting my role with a plan of engagement when the Covid lockdown struck.

One lesson I want to share

Building relationships are key to everything you do in this role.



My role in relation to WHM

To find space where people feel welcomed.



Christine Ashton

Community Development Fieldworker
Newton Heath

Making a difference, even if it's just a small one.

We are different at WHM – and it's a good job we are! We start with the communities, building relationships and gaining trust. When the relationships are built, we can empower people to make changes to their lifestyle and/or communities, for a better future.

Having the freedom to decide how to adapt our work throughout the pandemic, and knowing what impact that has made to some residents.

There have definitely been a few, but I suppose the one that hit home the most was people not having empathy during the pandemic. Not everything is about money or a service - sometimes a friendly voice of someone who has empathy can make a big difference. It's not a skill that is used enough!

The challenges our communities face can be really complex or really simple, but the benefit of a chat or call with a stranger can really improve mental wellbeing – not only for the residents, but for the person making the call. A call, or a quick visit at the window due to the pandemic, it all makes a difference to people. It's being able to think outside the box, and having the freedom to do so, that allowed us to reach some really isolated residents, and what I've learned is to imagine what effect it would have on communities if every service had this freedom.

To speak up for the communities! To enable them to feel empowered as to what choices they make and inform them on healthy life choices to increase wellbeing. Assisting them in finding help or assistance if required, and showing them how they can make small changes.



Nathan Martin

Community Development Fieldworker
Newton Heath

What matters to me

Family and friends, having the time and space to think about everything, and music!

Why WHM matters to me

WHM values working with people, and just doing nice things for everyone.

Best moment

The Newton Heath Poetry Competition – we were able to help give people a platform to show their talents and passion.

Hardest moment

The occasional existential crisis!

One lesson I want to share

We are all equal.

My role in relation to WHM

To be nice and be helpful.

Chris Bernard

Community Development Fieldworker
Cheetham

Mine and others' physical and mental wellbeing.

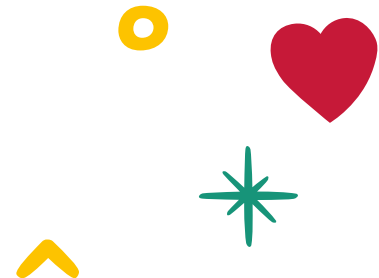
Having a different approach as to how we can affect communities in a positive way, and having the time to do so.

Helping some residents to become a little more digitally savvy and seeing the smiles (of wonderment) on their faces as a whole new world of possibilities becomes realised. Playing dominoes with Curtis and the guys at the Dementia Support Group.

Understanding the existing community politics, and helping groups to put this to one side in order to benefit residents.

Not to judge people based on first impressions, because if I remain open I am (more often than not) surprised in a good way.

To bring groups and people together.





Stacy Partridge

Community Development Fieldworker
Collyhurst

What matters to me

Being a role model to my under 16s football team and giving them a positive experience.

Why WHM matters to me

To give the residents a voice, and to be heard in their own community.

Best moment

Hearing and reading the feedback from our Knit-tastic project. How giving people something small has impacted their lives.

Hardest moment

Adapting my role when the Covid lockdowns began.

One lesson I want to share

Traditional services don't always have the answers.

My role in relation to WHM

To create positive moments.

Harriet Sutherland

Community Development Fieldworker
Charlestown

That people feel they are as important as every other person on this planet. We are all connected and we should look out for each other.

We provide empathy, kindness and enthusiasm to support people. Being able to fund community groups without all the fuss and paperwork means we can mobilize and resolve issues at short notice.

Meeting Sue Asprey at Chatterbox. An absolute superhuman. Every time I speak to her I cry and laugh in the same conversation.

Learning to understand the politics and background between various groups and individuals working in the community and helping people to see that we want to help – not create more work.

Not to let anything shake my enthusiasm to do nice things for the community. To continue to believe anything is possible even when faced with hurdles or barriers. It is not my place to become jaded but to power on with empathy and positivity without faltering.

To ease the pressure faced by community groups in the short term and help find and create long term solutions and benefits.





John Organ

Community Development Fieldworker
Charlestown

What matters to me

People having control over the environments they experience.

Why WHM matters to me

WHM is a recognition of the “need for something different”, while also being non-directive.

Best moment

Dogs being really welcome at community meetings, fed under the tables, and head scratches all round.

Hardest moment

The feeling of dislocation and detachment being in between services, communities, and decision makers.

One lesson I want to share

In a period of managed decline, optimism and experimentation are needed – but without the political bravery for constructive resistance, these first two may be insufficient to address health inequalities in any meaningful way.

My role in relation to WHM

A sounding board that gives options.

Parveen Akhtar

Community Development Fieldworker
Cheetham

People matter to me, and the need to engage, and be yourself. I’ve learnt new ways of working and skills that make you value the individuals in our communities.

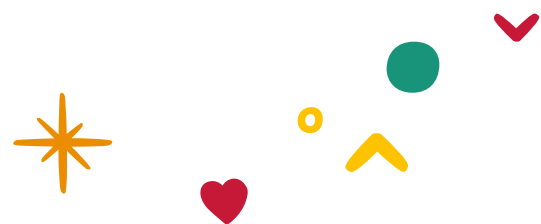
WHM has given me the opportunity to be myself – to be honest and true to myself, as well as everyone in the team, and the communities we work with.

A resident, who we helped get access to a laptop and phone through the Digital Inclusion Scheme [a scheme run by MCC, to provide residents with laptops and help with learning how to use them], ran out of data as she spent so much time on YouTube! This was great as she hadn’t really ever used the internet before we helped her get connected. Brilliant!

I have felt like I wasn’t being heard by services and local authority.

To be open and honest and never assume.

I feel I have contributed to everything! It has taken me out of my comfort zone on many occasions, but the team support is amazing in WHM.





Charli Dickenson

Winning Hearts and Minds
Programme Manager

What matters to me

Openness and honesty, courage to step outside the norm and champion that way of working, tackling inequality and building equity.

Why WHM matters to me

Making life better and improving opportunities for people in Manchester, people should never face poorer health outcomes just because of where they live, or their race, or their language etc. – understanding why that is the case and doing something about it.

Best moment

Any stories from the fieldworkers; hearing relief from senior colleagues when I tell them what we're doing; when I put a request out to the team and minutes later I have so many ideas and brilliance in my inbox!

Hardest moment

The ongoing anxiety that you have to hold at bay to do this work in this kind of way – parking the worry about how big a problem we're dealing with, and focusing on the things we can do.

One lesson I want to share

People are brilliant – trust that they will do amazing things if you give them the time, power and money.

My role in relation to WHM

To keep things moving, to remind everyone to be brave, and to let go of control – and to annoy the heck out of 'senior leaders' to do the same.

Nick Clayton

Winning Hearts and Minds
Programme Officer

Fairness and equity. Making sure everyone can have access to a happy experience in life, and that there isn't bias towards more "fashionable" areas for new initiatives.

The programme fits well with my personal opinions and views, I have the freedom to do what I feel is right, and we don't have to constantly justify ourselves – we have the space to just do the work!

Moving from being a fieldworker to the officer role for WHM – I guess that showed I must have done some good things as a fieldworker!

When Covid first hit, I was worried that we wouldn't be helping out with communities and would be redeployed out of our roles. Fortunately we were able to adapt what we do quickly, and help our communities in a big way!

We can change small things alone, but there is a limit to what we can affect. We can only achieve the aims of the project if we see change on a strategic level, as well as a community level.

I try to make sure things are moving on OK, and that everyone is supported, connected and feels able to show their value and individuality. I also keep track of the money!

Cat Duncan-Rees

Senior Community Facilitator

What matters to me

Being able to live the life I want to and do the things that are important to me and my family in ways that make sense to me and my family.

Why WHM matters to me

It matters because it demonstrates (not in the ways we expect) the impact that we can have when our focus is grounded in what matters to people and communities; not what matters to the system.

Best moment

The standout for me that underpins our ethos and the work so far is the recruitment process, in particular the group interviews, and how much we learned about people and the possibilities that were opening up from being able to rewrite the traditional recruitment rules.

Hardest moment

Supporting the team to navigate the shift from being out in the heart of communities to being locked down, helping them remember why WHM makes a difference to people.

One lesson I want to share

There is no shortcut, or substitute, to investing in relationships right from the start! Recruiting people based on who they are, not against a set of restrictive criteria, and creating space for them to build connections and relationships with one another and the communities they are working to support.

My role in relation to WHM

I sit outside the system and hold space for honest and open reflection and conversation about the team's experiences, what they are learning, what they want to achieve. Gently reminding the team that they can try things differently, that it's ok to fail, learn and move on!

Cordelle Ofori

Consultant in Public Health Medicine
Manchester Population Health Team,
Manchester City Council

Family, relationships, and helping people to be the best they can be.

We can genuinely make a difference if we work in a different way with the people who live and work in North Manchester, focusing on what matters to them and on finding solutions together rather than focusing on the problems.

Meeting the fieldworkers – the energy, creativity and diversity of thought that was in the room was very exciting; a team that could make change together with people.

Recognising that the way we originally planned to do coproduction wasn't going to work. We had to completely rethink how we were going to find the people who we needed to engage, and build relationships with to make this happen.

It's really important to stick to your vision and goal and not let go of it, but at the same time be prepared to change the way that you get there.

As part of my role with Manchester's Population Health Team, I realised that using an approach that kept people and communities involved and at the centre, could potentially have a significant long-term impact for population health in North Manchester. My role is to lead strategically, to champion the programme, and to look for more opportunities for us to bring people with us.





Sarah Lydon

Head of Health and Wellbeing, MCRactive

David Regan

Director of Public Health,
Manchester City Council

What matters to me

In short, my family and our health.

Improving the health of the people of Manchester.

Why WHM matters to me

I want people to live the healthiest and happiest lives that we can and I'm not a fan of how people struggle to achieve this because of factors outside of their control. I am a Moston girl, so seeing this investment into my area makes me firstly feel grateful, but secondly sad that this is required for a place I genuinely love.

Because it's a brilliant example of working with communities rather than doing to them.

Best moment

I was going to say meeting the fieldworkers, but what I learned afterwards was that actually getting to know them was even better.

The engagement and support of key partners to Winning Hearts and Minds.

Hardest moment

Finding enough time to show an appropriate amount of appreciation to the WHM team since the pandemic started. What that team did in the City's desperate time was beyond inspiring and I will forever be grateful for the team spirit, the roll-your-sleeves-and-get-stuck-in attitude and ultimately their part in saving people's lives. I am very proud to know and work with them.

Having to respond to covid pandemic and not being able to be as involved as I would have liked.

One lesson I want to share

How difficult people find it to reflect and adapt. It is what is great about the principles of WHM. It is encouraged and celebrated and should be more widely incorporated.

It takes time to build trust and to do engagement work effectively.

My role in relation to WHM

Essentially MCRactive are a 'host' as well as a partner for the programme. What the WHM team has done as part of the MCRactive family is push the rest of the organisation to try new approaches, finding non-traditional and innovative methods to achieve the goal of getting Mancunians to move more.

I sit on the Winning Hearts and Minds board and help drive forward to work at a strategic level.



Anne Taylor

Strategic Lead Neighbourhoods North

What matters to me

My family, my community, my health, nature and the environment around me and doing the best job I can for the people of Manchester.

Why WHM matters to me

I see every day how challenging life can be for people in NorthManchester and how poor health makes things more difficult. WHM is a great opportunity to make some grass roots changes that will help people live well.

Best moment

Seeing how well the process for recruitment for the community development fieldworkers worked to bring in staff with strong local knowledge – and meeting the workers

Hardest moment

Understanding the potential impact that Covid could have on communities and our engagement with them.



One lesson I want to share

That the first step is to really listen to people and never make assumptions.

My role in relation to WHM

Take all opportunities to promote the strengths of neighbourhoods and connect residents partners and services to promote the aims and ambitions of WHM.

Khalada Abdullah

Senior Service Strategy Manager
Manchester Health and Care
Commissioning

Fairness and giving people the best chance in life matters to me.

WHM has been led by a bunch of people from different walks of life who are passionate about improving the health and wellbeing of people in Manchester. Seeing people work collaboratively, challenging the norm and maximising opportunities has been inspiring.

My favourite moments are always listening to the feedback from the fieldworkers. Their engagement with communities gives us rich information which always makes me reflect on what I can do better in my role or influence change.

There are so many competing priorities for people and organisations. Bringing systems to come together to work under Winning Hearts and Minds and focus on cardiovascular outcomes has been both challenging but also rewarding when this has been made possible. I am proud to say WHM programme put us in a positive position to deal with the pandemic, and is even more vital as we move into recovery and addressing the health inequalities exacerbated by Covid-19.

There is no one solution, or one approach that can bring about the greatest change and collaboration is key.

I previously lead and built the Healthy Hearts workstream of Winning Hearts & Minds, which focuses on the clinical improvements to Cardiovascular Disease.





*Community
Led Initiatives*
2019-2021

So what has the first two years of the programme looked like?

Here, we'll give you a bit of a breakdown of what we got up to, and we'll also include some snippets from our regular **Liked, Lacked, Learned, Longed for** sessions, so you can see how we were feeling at the time.



Recruitment

April to June 2019

A new approach was taken to the recruitment of the Community Development Fieldworkers, who would be working within communities in North Manchester.

These fieldworkers would be responsible for investigating and building strengths in communities, looking at how wider social determinants impact on health, and creating sustainable opportunities within communities to leave a positive and evolving legacy.

What resulted was the recruitment of eight diverse fieldworkers, from a range of backgrounds, all with connections to North Manchester.

Each brings something different to the team: experiences, understanding, perspectives, community knowledge, enthusiasm... the list goes on. For more information on the recruitment process and how it broke the traditional recruitment rules, please see **Impact on the System: Recruitment**.



Settling in

July to September 2019

“Not as much structure as I am used to – not a solid answer to the question of what I should be doing!”

Lacked, August 2019

We spent this time getting to know North Manchester. We decided at an early stage that we weren't looking to start any projects at this early stage – the most important aspect of our project is being community-led.

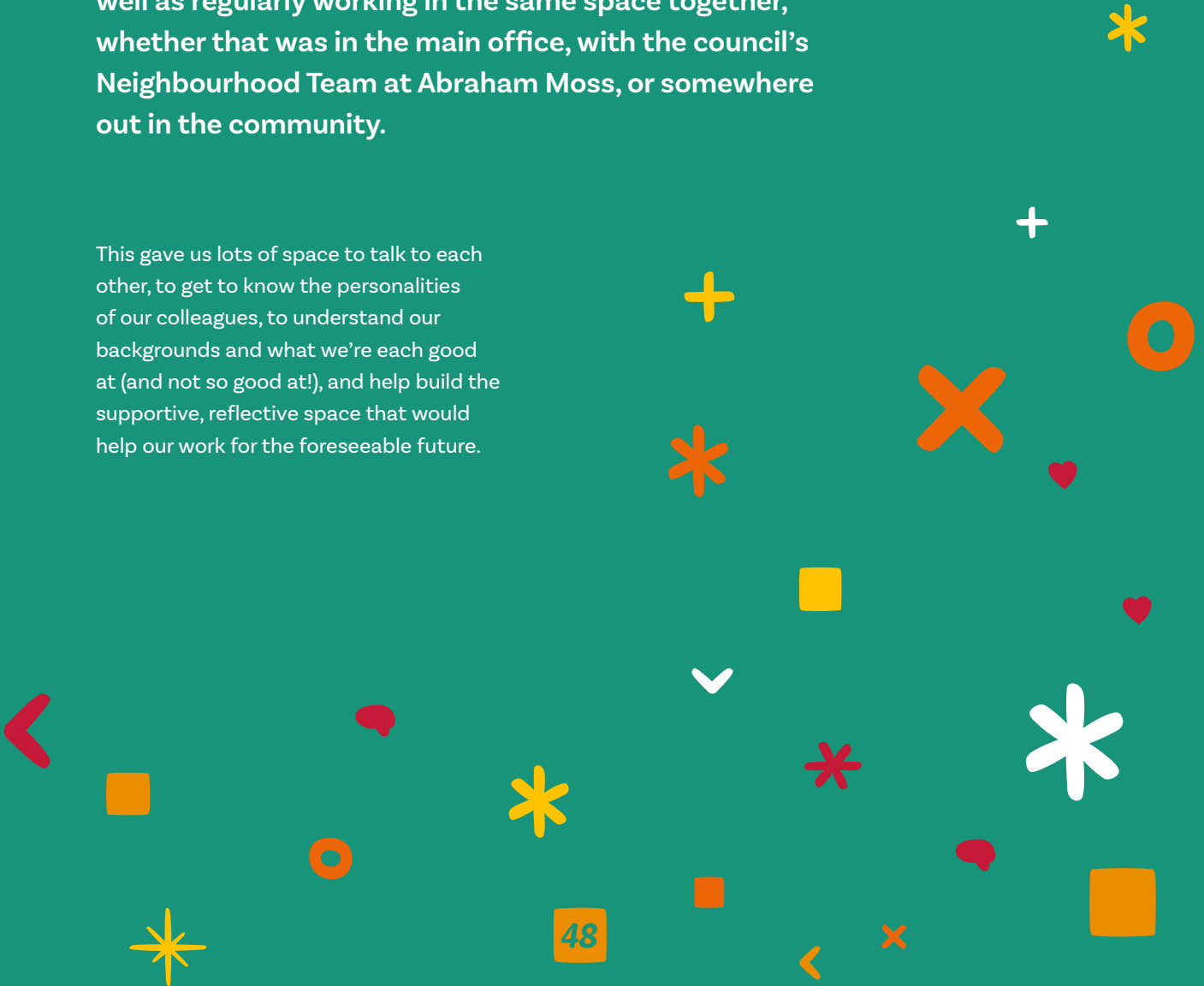
To be properly community-led we would need to get to know our communities as fully as possible – the community groups, the faith groups, the sports clubs, the shops, the geography of the area, the people we are working alongside in North Manchester, and, most importantly, the residents.

“Listening has been crucial, we have learned that we don't need to do the things we thought because communities are already doing amazing things if we take time to look and listen. What I thought I would be doing is already there!”

Learned, August 2019

This time was also an opportunity to get to know each other better. We went to areas, met community groups, met other organisations and spoke to residents as an eight, in pairs, in twos and threes and alone – as well as regularly working in the same space together, whether that was in the main office, with the council’s Neighbourhood Team at Abraham Moss, or somewhere out in the community.

This gave us lots of space to talk to each other, to get to know the personalities of our colleagues, to understand our backgrounds and what we’re each good at (and not so good at!), and help build the supportive, reflective space that would help our work for the foreseeable future.



Planning how we work

October to December 2019

We decided to work in pairs across the four focus areas: Cheetham, Collyhurst, Newton Heath and Charlestown. We were given the freedom to be flexible with how we organised the pairs, matching up the right people in the right places.

“Love how there is no feeling of dread or disappointment coming home from holiday.”

Liked, October 2019


As pairs, we then began to get to know fellow community workers (Council Neighbourhood Teams, Buzz, Health Development Coordinators, Integrated Neighbourhood Team leads) and community groups (food banks, churches, mosques, community centres, cafes etc.).



JARGON BUSTER

Directive: Work in which someone is told what to do, or how to do it, with no freedom to work in a way that makes most sense to the individual.

We spent a lot of time reminding ourselves that it was ok if we didn't have all the answers yet – **this wasn't about having a short-term impact.** It felt uncomfortable after so many of our previous jobs had been very directive in telling us what to do. We had to get comfortable with that uncomfortable feeling, and remember that while it might feel nice to have delivered X number of sessions – we want to have a real, long-lasting impact, rather than to simply intervene for a short amount of time and leave a vacuum when we aren't there anymore.

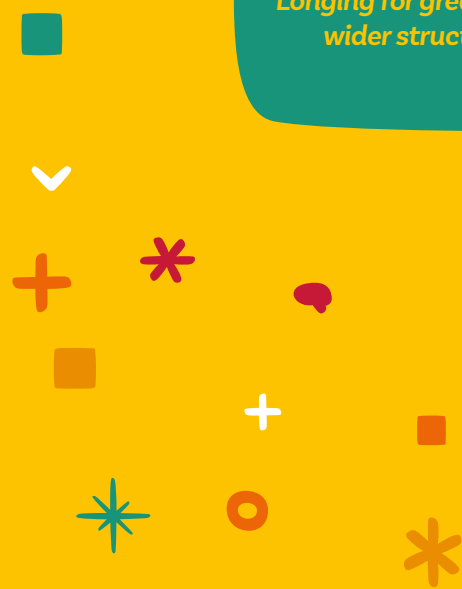



“We have built a level of trust with each other and the communities we are working in. The awareness of WHM is growing.”

Liked, October 2019

Our assumptions about communities were regularly challenged, and we found ourselves having to think quite differently to what we had originally expected and throw out a lot of our early ideas.

This reinforced, once again, how important it had been to **listen to people**, to **continually learn**. Had we tried to have an immediate impact early in the programme, by undertaking projects and ‘getting on with it’ – we would have missed the point, and certainly not been community-led.



“Longing for greater openness and honesty and clarity over where we fit within wider structures (or not). Feels like we are working against the system!”

Longed for, October 2019

Trying out a few projects

January to March 2020

We noticed initially that although we were present, spending a lot of time in our communities, talking to people constantly and showing that we were there for people, **it took quite some time to build trust with everyone – community workers, community groups and residents.**

It was around this phase that we felt we were trusted to take the things we'd been hearing in communities and begin to try out some small projects in our areas of focus in North Manchester.

We discussed starting a few small projects with some local groups and residents. This was quite nerve-wracking at first – after six months of listening to people, learning, and waiting until we knew a bit more – it felt like there was pressure to “get it right”.

Talking about this as a group though, we realised this was individual pressure we were putting on ourselves and we wouldn't know what was ‘right’ until we got started.

Our advice to our past selves? Trust your gut, and accept that some ideas will fail. And that is OK – just make sure you learn why something fails, and what you can do differently next time.



Covid-19

March 2020

In the first weeks of the Covid-19 pandemic and the arrival of lockdown in the UK, we quickly realised that we couldn't continue as before. We needed to totally reshape our work because we couldn't get out and talk to people in the same way.

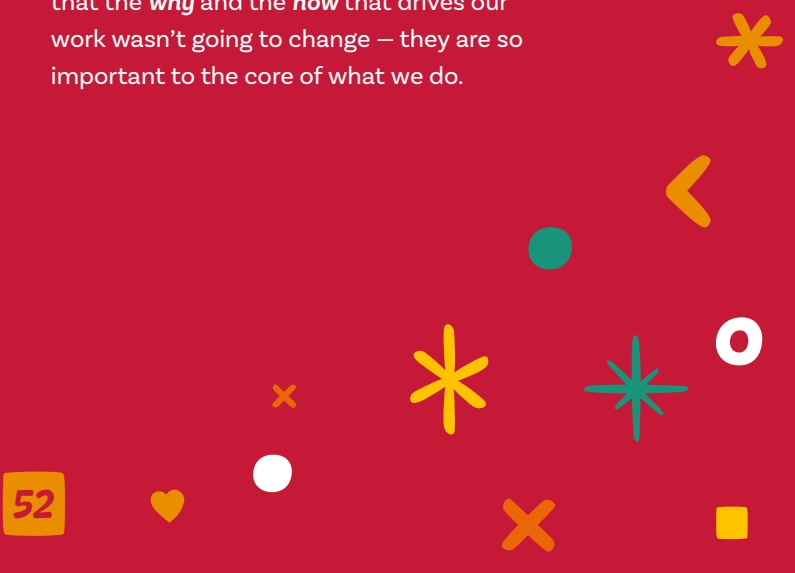
We also recognised the immediate challenge faced by residents and community groups, particularly those who might be more in need of help, and for those who supported them.

We spent a couple of weeks waiting, where we paused to make sure we were able to offer our support to wider community responses.

We had a lot of conversations, both within the team and with community groups, to figure out where we could help.

It felt very difficult to sit and wait, even just for two or three weeks. We soon realised that we just needed to start helping, wherever we could.

We didn't plan *what* we were going to do, especially being restricted from being out in the community. However, we knew that the *why* and the *how* that drives our work wasn't going to change – they are so important to the core of what we do.



Supporting our communities through Covid

March 2020

As volunteering opportunities presented themselves, we were able to offer help very quickly. We knew lockdown was hurting our communities and we wanted to help.

We also came up with some of our own initiatives, based on what we were hearing from our communities and groups in North Manchester.

Everyone was free to take up what work they felt was needed most, and what suited them best – some fieldworkers took up full time redeployment in new MCC roles such as food delivery; some worked full time on more typical WHM-type projects, such as Befriending, and the Activity Packs project; some did a mix of the two.

“‘Magic Moments’ are key. The small stuff matters; a phone call; a conversation; a very small act of support – it makes people feel valued.”

Learned, July 2020

Taking up such a variety of projects, in areas we wouldn't ever have traditionally worked in, gave us some new connections to residents, colleagues, groups and organisations we wouldn't have had contact with any other way.

Every project and redeployment taught us something new we didn't see before or know already about our community or about our sector.

“How institutionalised some organisations are is driving us gently backwards. It seems easier to manage our professional short-term interests than get to know communities.”

Learned, July 2020



Returning to Winning Hearts and Minds

September to December 2020

“There is a huge amount of enthusiasm and passion in the team to just get on and do stuff, but also a lot still to learn about our roles, the communities and what will make a difference.”

Learned, October 2020

Towards the end of summer, lockdown started to ease slightly and we were able to withdraw a little from the various redeployment we had committed to, and return to something that looked more like our ‘normal’ work.

However, we were forever changed by our experiences, and we knew our future work would be informed by them.

“How much of an impact we have had on communities through the small things: getting residents a phone; the Newton Heath poetry trail; being creative.”

Liked, October 2020

We continued with some of our summer work, but we also wanted to run with some of the other projects we had been thinking about and planning.

This grew into things like: our allotment project; connecting local schools and care homes in a postcard and Christmas present exchange project; getting involved with MCC's Digital Inclusion project to help residents get digitally savvy; and handing out 250 refurbished phones with twelve months of data to community members who needed them.



“Longed to feel that we are being listened to by the system. Really listened to, in the way that we are listening to people and communities and responding to what we hear!”
 Longed for, October 2020

“That we are leading the way – and accepting that it’s ok to fail, as long as we are continually learning.”
 Liked, October 2020

The experience we gained during lockdown and redeployment – building on our earlier connections with residents and community groups proved to be priceless in going back into communities, and meant we were able to take advantage of any opportunities that presented themselves.

Feeling more comfortable

January to March 2021

In recent months, we have begun to really put our foot on the accelerator when it comes to the projects we work on.

“Our capacity to adapt, change and respond has demonstrated the art of the possible.”

Liked, January 2021

We have been collaborating more and working on larger projects as a result.

We have been successfully applying for funding for new projects in the community, while also building on previous projects.

“Relationships really do matter - even recently, communities have talked about bad experiences of engaging with services. They don't forget, and it takes time to build trust and relationships that move people on. Because of the time and energy we have invested in relationships, people are increasingly coming to us – they are relieved we are still here. They seek us out!”

Learned, January 2021



Impact

When it comes to measuring the impact of the Community Led Initiatives programme, it's been a challenging topic.

**Do we know we've had an impact? Definitely!
But can we capture that impact in traditional ways? That's where it gets complicated.**

The programme was commissioned with the understanding that we needed to do things differently, and that extends to measuring things differently too.

In this section we'll tell you about the impact that we've had, both in communities themselves, but also on ways of working across the system. This is a brief snapshot of impact from the last two years of work – there's so much more detail that we can't include here (and believe us, we tried!).

We've organised these stories under our Behaviours and Principles set out in section four, but you'll spot there's a lot of crossover!

Following this report, we'll be regularly sharing more of these stories to show exactly what this way of working looks like and its resulting impact.



Just try something!

The mantra of 'Just try something' has been with us all since the early days. It captures how we try not to spend too much time planning or trying to guess what might have an impact – if we have an idea, we start small and try it out, accepting that we'll learn more quickly about what works and what doesn't.

When we land on something that works, we're then able to help it to grow in a way that best helps people.

We've had some great experiences of this in practice, and most of our work has evolved out of something we've tried elsewhere.

In the summer of 2020 when we were thinking about how we could reach and help people who needed a bit of extra support during lockdown, we decided to put together activity packs for some of the people we'd come across. These packs included crossword puzzles and colouring in, as well as suggestions for home and chair based activity for those who couldn't get out.



These activity packs developed into several things. In Collyhurst, these turned into knitting packs, with accompanying online knitting sessions, which then developed into similar sessions in Charlestown. They were a helpful offer to partners in communities who we were trying to get to know – we worked with Higher Blackley's Sure Start centre to put together parent pamper packs and children's activity packs.

The real magic of the activity pack idea is the connections and learning it has resulted in. The knitting project alone helped us to link residents into other community groups in the area, to food banks, to befriending services, to advice and employment services and more.



* CASE STUDY

A woman who had previously experienced domestic abuse was referred to the knitting project by her GP. Signing up to the project opened up a wider conversation about her needs, and we were able to connect her to other local people and local projects who were able to provide practical help.

Between us, the Church of the Apostles, Lalley Centre, and the Digital Inclusion team at MCC, we helped her with a whole range of things from a laptop, furniture, and activities for her to do with her children.

The GP was then in a better position to help with her specific health needs, because there weren't as many other additional factors.

Be open, honest and vulnerable

Building relationships with people in the community has really helped us to really understand people and have a meaningful impact on their lives. Being open, honest and vulnerable has been an essential component in building relationships. We don't expect people to reveal everything about their lives without us giving anything in return – this might be our time, our experiences, our resources✕





Zaida's story

We met Zaida through some collaboration work we did with GPs – calling the list of shielding people to see if they needed any help, at the start of the pandemic.

“I started to experience a variety of emotions of feeling anxious, worried, scared and helpless. It felt like work was everything and by not working I didn't have a life.

We got chatting how my life changed dramatically from working from the past 30 years to a life indoors, which was a shock to me. Every week I would talk to Parveen and tell her things like I only go out in the garden to hang out washing, and how I suddenly took an interest in growing tomatoes and beetroot in the greenhouse to see if I have green fingers.

How It was weird that I didn't go shopping with my husband, like we had done for the past 20 years. There were days when I would feel down but I would say upwards and onwards.

I always looked forward to receiving that weekly call from Parveen, so I could tell her what exciting things I had done in the house like I took on the task of painting, which I can't believe I did with the help of my 11-year-old son. Did online furniture shopping which I have never done before, it was definitely an experience ordering a sofa and finding the colour didn't match the picture on the computer.”

Zaida wanted to get out more but was worried and scared about the prospect of catching Covid-19. Parveen suggested that together, they go on a walking session in Heaton Park.

“By doing an early morning walk it made me feel good and ready to face any challenges of the day. The walks brought back beautiful memories of my walks to high school which was situated in the park.”



Zaida is now part of a weekly Walking & Talking Group at Queen's Park. Queen's Park was chosen to give the ladies the freedom to do exercise in a space where they felt comfortable.

She also now volunteers for the befriending service with North Manchester Black Health Forum. She has received training through NMBHF, and she loves her new role!

“In my opinion both Parveen and Chris do a great job encouraging everyone to do their best, enjoy the task and have fun.”

Be understanding

One of the key ways of working that has made it into our framework is about Listening to People, but it is essential that this is underpinned by striving to understand people as a result of listening in the first place.

If we just listen at the surface, any impact will stay at the surface, and won't help us delve into how communities are really thinking and feeling.

In Newton Heath, Christine, Nathan and Stacy regularly attended the weekly coffee mornings at Newton Heath Library, and got to know the other people who attended.

We were also put in touch with a local history group, who were a bit more wary of us – they'd had people turn up before to do consultations, and then had never come back, so we were really keen to show that we were sticking around, and really cared about what they thought.

Lots of the conversations reflected on how Newton Heath used to be, things people looked back on fondly, and how that had changed in recent years. People noted that there was a lack of community pride in Newton Heath.

This developed into a I♥NH campaign to help people remember what it is they love about the area where they live. Part of the campaign was around a poetry competition for people to submit poems about why they loved Newton Heath. It had a prize of a £50 voucher and the poems would be put on display at Newton Heath Library.

I ♥ NH



We judged the entries alongside Cllr Carmine Grimshaw, Donna from the library and Damian from the coffee morning and announced the winner alongside another event happening at the library to share the poems even wider.

Future plans for the poetry project include creating a mural with Joan's winning poem, as well as some further engagement work with a local artist to see what local residents would like to include on the mural – all centred around continuing the I ♥ NH message.

There's lots and lots of reasons
Why I love Newton Heath
I haven't room to name them all
So I shall keep it brief

The friendliness of people
That really warms my heart
The other is on Droylsden Road
Our lovely Brookdale Park

The third thing I shall mention
That means the world to me
Is that great place on Church Street
Our fantastic library

And tho it may be shabby
And not always look its best
Newton Heath the place I Love
Until I'm laid to rest

Joan Toomey



Be brave

The concept of 'Be brave' is a broad one, but for us, it often feels like being uncomfortable. It's that uncomfortable feeling that tells us that we're doing something outside of the norm, that we're doing things differently, and that's probably the direction we need to go.

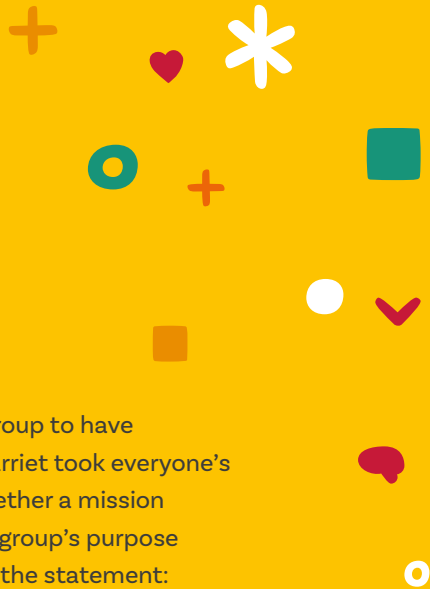
Being brave is tough, but is exactly what is needed when we're trying to improve people's lives.

Sometimes being brave is through projects and trying out things that haven't been done before, but more commonly it looks like being brave in how we work with other people. There's often a lot of competition in community work – competing for funding, for people to count as outcomes, for a seat at the table and this doesn't always allow community work to thrive.

Breaking down some of these barriers has been key to us working successfully, but also key to better collaboration across the community, even when we're not involved.

A great example of this work has been Harriet and John's attendance at Charlestown's fortnightly neighbourhood meetings organised by the area's Neighbourhood Health Development Coordinator, Dave Bradley.

At one meeting, Dave shared some statistics in relation to ethnicity and the effects of Covid-19. The information included what we already knew about health inequalities in our areas but further highlighted the poorer health outcomes faced by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. There was clear motivation at the meeting to do something about this, which led to Dave instigating the set-up of the first Neighbourhood Inclusion Group meeting in December 2020.



The purpose of the Neighbourhood Inclusion Group was to bring a wide range of services and VCSE organisations together to start to tackle social and racial injustices that are evident across our neighbourhood at a local and targeted level.

The Neighbourhood Inclusion group designed three questions to focus on for some Community Dialogue sessions:

1. What do you like about your area?
2. What are your concerns in this area?
3. What changes do you wish to see happening and how could service providers empower residents to be involved in addressing those concerns?

The organisations within the Neighbourhood Inclusion Group have been very clear that they want to be community led and inclusive – one of the comments from the first Community Dialogue session that often gets repeated in the group is “no one gets left behind”.

We needed to be flexible, adaptable and be able to respond to what we’re hearing in communities without being constrained by a strategy.

With the need for the group to have something on paper, Harriet took everyone’s comments and put together a mission statement to show the group’s purpose and aims. This included the statement:

“We will remain open for the group to change agenda or direction based on the overarching requirement for the group to be focusing on what the community wants.”

Our contribution to the group is not as straightforward as claiming credit for this or that, but the importance of reinforcing this community led message and the need to be brave to meet community needs shouldn’t be understated. It appears to be subtle but has been essential in building trust and creating strong connections to help people to work together.

The group has already contributed to a number of projects bringing in over £65,000 into inclusive community projects in North Manchester.

“Your commitment to working as a neighbourhood and not an independent service has meant the development of a neighbourhood approach is now much more achievable.... Suffice to say though that our neighbourhood now feels so much more connected than in previous years and that is down to all those partners that connect within the neighbourhood. Going forward I see WHM as a completely integral part of the neighbourhood and a welcome addition.”

Dave Bradley
Health Development Coordinator
Higher Blackley, Charlestown
and Harpurhey

Be flexible

Yet another project that emerged from the inspiration of the early lockdown activity packs, was a project linked to food poverty and nutrition.

Together with NEPHRA, Buzz and Age Friendly, we created a soup recipe competition that came from various conversations happening amongst partners and people in the community. We thought it would be great if we could design and print a local recipe book and create soup kits to give out across the community.

The attitude of being flexible and adaptable really came in handy throughout this project. As is often the case on collaborative projects, there were a few logistical problems that came up that we needed to tackle.

There were also successes that meant we had to adapt too – what started as a community conversation in Collyhurst, soon turned into a multi organisation, North Manchester approach with the goal of getting 400 soup kits out to North Manchester residents.

The competition was advertised on all of the partners' social media, as well as through everyone's community networks. However, the most entries were received by word of mouth; through the relationships that people had with individuals out in communities, and them telling their friends too. We created an online form for people to submit recipes, but also found a lot of people wanted to send in hand written entries.

SOUP MADE BY YOU

We found a Manchester designer to put together the recipe book, and a nutritionist to give advice and tips alongside the recipes and decided to launch the book during nutrition week in January 2021.

The project delivered 400 Soup kits (including all the ingredients to make one of the soups) and recipe books to elderly residents across North Manchester, as well as giving 30 out slow cookers – one to each person who submitted a recipe.



“Loved the soup pack; me and my dad made it together. I got him to do all the chopping! Tasty soup too!”

Stephen

“Great way to get the grandkids interested in eating vegetables.”

Molly

“Never made soup before, but I’ll be making it again and using my cookbook.”

George



Impact on the system



Our work in North Manchester communities are only one part of the story – we know that if we only focus on this work, our impact will be limited.



If we want to truly have a transformative effect, we need to help the system to tackle health inequalities.

The WHM leadership reflected on their learning (4Ls) at the start of 2019 before the fieldworkers were recruited:

- In order to engage with people and communities you have to go and find people – don't expect them to come to you.
- Organisation politics inhibit progress.
- Gaining insights and knowledge is easier when we can listen deeply and patiently.
- Siloed approaches cause confusion and slow progress. Organisations don't know what each other are doing – what chance do residents have?



Recruitment



The Community Led Initiatives business case included the recruitment of eight Community Development Fieldworkers. We recognised these people needed to be grounded in communities to deepen our understanding of what really matters to people.

Continually Learning: *We knew we needed different people, so we had to recruit differently.*

It was agreed we could re-write the recruitment rules, and recruit people based on their passion for North Manchester, people and communities – with a clear invite to apply even if people didn't think they met the official recruitment criteria.

We also agreed we didn't need to follow the official shortlisting rules but could follow our curiosity and shortlist any of the 30 candidates that we would like to know more about. The official shortlist was seven, we shortlisted twenty-one.

Key to the interviews was inviting people to be comfortable, and being up front about the kinds of questions we would be asking.

Workshops were structured to include space for individual reflection, interaction, and creative expression.



If you can answer even a few of these questions with a YES – then please put in an application.

Do you know what people locally are struggling with, frustrated about – or are you interested in finding out?

Do you like to ask questions and understand why things are the way they are?

Would you like to see local people have much more control over their own lives, and the things that might help them?

Do you want to go and find out more about what is happening in your area – and then shout about it from the rooftops – encourage people to get more involved?

Excerpt from Job Advert, March 2019

“When I turned up I wasn’t being me – I was being a version of me that I wanted to put across. I think that’s quite normal at interviews. But the panel really helped with that – they were human, and real, and that meant that I felt comfortable to be the real me, too.”

Quote from a fieldworker
about the process

Building Trust: *The interviewees didn’t necessarily trust the different ways of interviewing to begin with – the panel had to build that trust with the interviewees.*

Recruiting in this way allowed us to select people for who they were, not just how well they met the criteria.

We had no prior experience of recruiting in this way, but the strategy group was clear that if we were to achieve something different, we needed to recruit differently. This was the system being brave.

From day one we built in time for ongoing reflection. Analysis of the learning from the reflection has emerged into ways of working that are determined by what matters to communities:

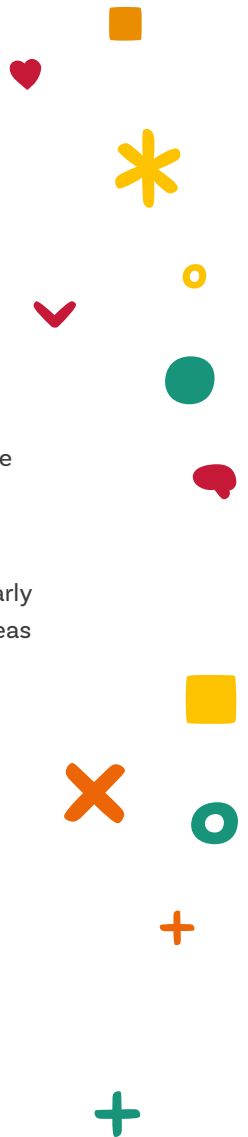
Just try something: Encouraging Fieldworkers not to over plan, but to get cracking in communities

Be open, honest and vulnerable: Sharing our feelings of unease helped us not feel shame, and team relationships grew much more quickly

Be brave: Being brave is a skill. Creating a safe space for people to feel they are able to be brave is vital

Continually learning: Coming together regularly to reflect, giving alternative perspectives, ideas and support

Building Trust: *This way of working is uncertain, and that can feel uncomfortable. By building relationships in the team, we are able to support each other when uncertainty feels overwhelming, and that the uncomfortable feeling is OK, rather than something to be changed.*



Covid-19 and governance

Nine months of working in ways that were flexible and adaptable meant we were able to quickly respond to what people in communities told us they needed during lockdowns.

In the first six months of the pandemic we spoke to more communities, worked with more people, digitally connected people, built stronger relationships and uncovered more issues.

The team established a befriending service; mobilised other staff across MCRactive who wanted to help; went onto streets with neighbourhood teams to take part in Covid mythbusting; called individuals who were shielding to see what support they needed; delivered food parcels; volunteered to staff the NHS Rest and Relaxation Centre. If someone asked for help, whatever it was, we did it.

The wider programme and governance were put on hold as staff were redeployed to contribute to the immense challenge of responding to the Covid-19 crisis.

Continually Learning: *There was no process on how to react to Covid. We moved to help in the places we knew we would be needed most, and adapted.*

This gave fieldworkers more freedom to respond creatively in the ways they are supporting people and communities, and this is something we want to actively continue into the future.

But while there have been advantages, less governance has meant less opportunity for collaboration at a strategic level. There have been missed opportunities to collaborate with the wider system.

Working Together: *Covid has contributed to making strategic-level collaboration more difficult – it's important to pick this up if we want to have a wider impact.*

Sharing the WHM approach

It would be nice to say “ignore the system! We’re doing this our way!” – but if we want to have a wider impact, we need to bring as many people with us as we can.

Therefore a large part of the role for WHM leadership is to tell the system what we’re doing, and find people who want to join us.

Working Together: We have to bring others into this way of working in order to create system change.

In response to this we created pods – experimental, cross-department teams that included fieldworkers alongside other MCRactive employees. Pods meet regularly, sharing thoughts about what they are working on.

This is wider than the WHM programme, but came about because of the way the fieldworkers have worked alongside people in the wider system, and created enthusiasm for testing out different ways of working.

“Trying different approaches to structure and governance – the pods have opened up possibilities, new connections, extra ideas, greater passion and enthusiasm, helped to break down some of the hierarchies and opened up the possibilities”

Liked, October 2020



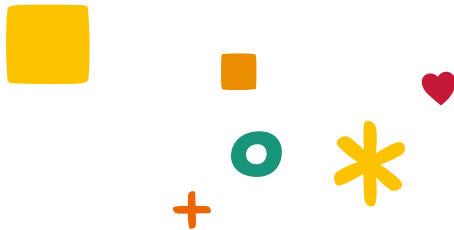
Continually Learning: So far, the feedback has largely been positive, particularly from those not used to working in this different way. Things aren't perfect, but we're much less siloed than before.

The fieldworkers are confident to continue forging the way, challenging the system, and expanding our understanding of what it means to be community led.



There's still much work to do – as the frontline work pulls us forward challenging norms, the wider system is telling us to be careful and work within the constraints of the system.

But leaders are listening and creating space for frontline staff to inform the wider WHM approach and strengthen the WHM framework.



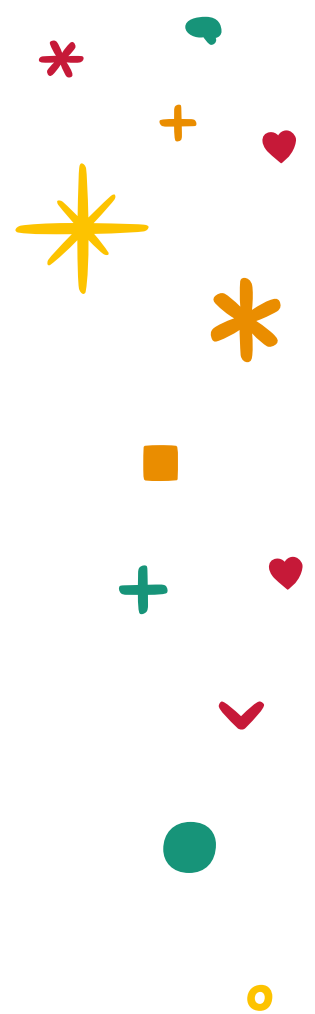


*What's next for
Community
Led Initiatives*

As set out in our framework this approach is ever changing, flexible and adaptable, so when we look at our next steps, this commitment to developing as we go is crucial.

There's also some clear learning that we've already got that we want to start sharing further and influencing other work across Manchester.

Here's a few of our recommendations to ourselves, and to anyone else who wants to join us in working in this way.



In order to continue our work on Community Led Initiatives, we will:

- Use the WHM Framework to shape and direct our work, and adapt it where needed
- Keep forging ahead with this way of working in communities, and find ways to bring other parts of the system along with us
- Ensure our work is driven by communities, what matters to people, and is theirs to own
- Find the people that want to work this way at a strategic level and create a network to find new places to apply the framework
- Get creative with how we use our funding, seeking out people and organisations who aren't the usual suspects to work with
- Apply the framework to our other WHM workstreams, through collaboration and identifying new opportunities
- Build programme governance that is rooted in community and gives the freedom to be flexible and adaptable
- Create space to regularly reflect on our work and its impact

We believe that by continuing with these goals, we'll have even more to say in another year. We'll look forward to checking in with you again then!



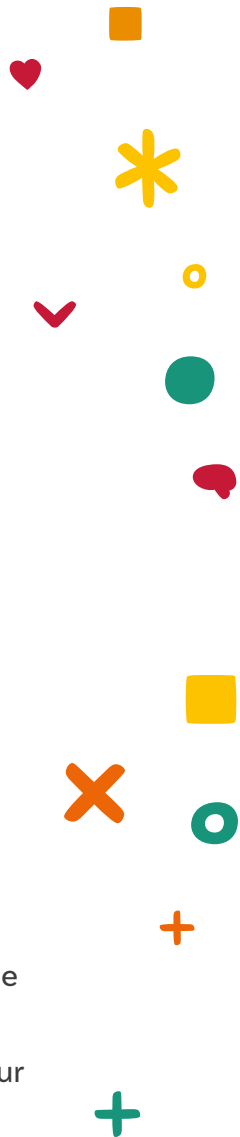
*What's next for
Winning Hearts
and Minds*

Community Led Initiatives has come a long way in the last two years, but it's just one of four workstreams that make up Winning Hearts and Minds.

Unfortunately the Healthy Hearts, Healthy Minds and Healthy Lifestyles workstreams were paused at the start of the pandemic, and we now need to get this work up and running again as part of the Population Health Recovery plan for the city.

Now, more than ever, we can see the importance of tackling health inequalities and improving health equity in Manchester.


Restarting these workstreams, while considering the lessons learned in the last two years is at the top of our to do list.





So what does this look like?

- Working with the University of Manchester to continue to develop a robust method to measure the impact of Community Led Initiatives
- Working with Manchester Local Care Organisation and GPs in Primary Care to develop the Healthy Hearts and Healthy Minds workstreams using the principles of WHM with a focus on improving clinical outcomes
- Working with neighbourhoods, communities and experts in communication to develop culturally relevant campaigns to help people build healthy habits within their context of their lives
- Co-producing a wellbeing model specifically for people with severe and enduring mental health needs
- Creating of a network of more people across Manchester who want to work in this way, connecting community to services, and reshaping how decisions are made



The Winning Hearts and Minds team has been essential to each of the stories we've shared, whether in small ways, or through much larger input.

Building a team underpinned by the WHM behaviours has allowed the team to thrive and support each other to do great things. Here's a selection of feedback we've had about individuals and the team that we want to shout about:

"I just wanted to email to say A has said some wonderful things about you and the support you're giving her. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you – it has made a world of difference and A is definitely sounding a lot more positive on our calls!"

"Thank you Parveen and Chris for supporting me during this pandemic much appreciated."

"I would also like to thank you for all of your support with the covid clinics and the befriending you offer, you make a huge difference."

Claire Duffy, Health Development Coordinator
(Befriending Project)

"Just had a thought, since you have been supplying me with the activities, I've realised I'm sleeping much better, they are a good thing, thank you sweetheart."

"Brilliant effort guys, and thank you Richard for being supportive as always. I look forward to our meeting on Thursday to discuss how it's been and also next steps."

Zakaria Valli, Health Development Coordinator
(Together in time – Pen pal project)

"I just wanted to let you know what an absolute star John has been in supporting me with the staff survey – he's been an absolute god-send and I really, really appreciate his help. I have told him how much I appreciate his help but just wanted you guys to be aware of it too. In fact – all your team deserve a pat on the back from me – they've been amazing with the redeployment responses and supporting the communities, they really have made my life easier with their willingness."

"I'm so thankful for Parveen. Having someone that can speak Urdu has been a lifesaver during these difficult times. please thank her again from me."

Ruqia Allana, North Manchester Black Health Forum
(Community COVID calls)

Jennie Morton, MCRactive

"It's great to have Nick, Chris and Nathan on board with the food deliveries. They have been so accommodating and willing to support the efforts which has made my job much easier."

Ann Marie Dunne, Manchester City Council
(MCC food deliveries)

"Thank you for your efforts. Honestly, such a pleasant experience."

Emma Davis, Manchester Settlement
(Befriending project)

"Thank you so much for the work that your team is doing on the lists – that is a really fast turn around."

"Harriet is a great addition to the team and is making a real difference to the community."

Lizzie Hughes, Integrated Neighbourhood Lead
(GP triage calls)

Alice Munby, GMMH

This report was written by Charli Dickenson,
Nick Clayton and Cat Duncan-Rees.

They would like to thank everyone involved in Winning
Hearts and Minds for their contributions and wider
colleagues at MCRactive and Manchester's Population
Health Team for their feedback and proof reading expertise.

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Be brave: Building Community Led Initiatives
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