

## Learning Snapshot: Working with Community Assets

Ageing Better is a test and learn programme funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

We collect information and insights from across 14 partnerships and use this learning to support service deliverers, funders and policy makers working to reduce social isolation in people aged 50+.

This learning snapshot details key findings and recommendations relating to working with community assets when supporting people aged over 50.

You can use it as a summary of the full [learning report](#), to share practical tools with colleagues and in teams, or include in your own presentations and briefings.

<p><b>1. Why focus on community assets?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with community assets is a key component of Ageing Better’s strengths based programme. It means being ‘people focused’ and ‘place based’.</li> <li>• Community assets include the skills, knowledge and interests of individuals, and the many resources of the voluntary, community and business sectors locally.</li> <li>• There is an opportunity to improve how we share community asset development tools and data collection methods across different organisations and places; improving outcomes for people and contributing to the wider evidence base.</li> </ul>	<p><b>2. What are the challenges?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Localised factors such as the demographics of an area, the relationship between some communities and organisations or initiatives, and the loss of shared spaces, can all present challenges when working with community assets.</li> <li>• Personal challenges often need addressing before people can contemplate wider community involvement. This could include support for financial issues, health problems and caring responsibilities.</li> <li>• Ageing Better found there to be a lack of continuity by services using qualitative tools to measure community asset impact.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. So what can we do with this learning?</b> Mapping local asset opportunities, building on existing local strengths, and demonstrating the impact of community asset development will help achieve better outcomes for people, support future funding bids and engage place based asset partners.</p> <p><b>Test and learn from services in your area:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track the people you connect with, the support provided and the outcomes.</li> <li>• Track the growth of interconnected relationships within the local ecosystem.</li> <li>• Compare the extent of assets in communities you have worked in with those you haven’t. Map the opportunities.</li> <li>• Create opportunities for people to share their own stories creatively, promoting community assets and celebrating impact.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. How can we work with community assets to improve outcomes for people?</b> Good practice community asset development embraces principles of co-facilitation and co-design. You can help activate existing social networks and connections and mobilise new ones in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help people to set up their own groups around shared interests; developing strengths that exist in the community.</li> <li>• Provide training and mentoring; especially for the more complex organisational, legal and financial structures.</li> <li>• Be sensitive to the level of support needed (or not) for established groups.</li> <li>• Link existing programmes, activities or support and help mobilise new partners such as businesses and space providers.</li> </ul>