

# People Led approach

We want you to show that the people you work with are meaningfully involved in the development, design and delivery of your project.

## What do we mean by people-led?

- People-led means involving the people who will benefit in the design and delivery of projects.
- When we say people, we mean the people that take part in projects, their networks (such as family, friends, carers) and the wider community that your organisation work in.

Involvement can mean a broad range of ways, from the day to day chats you have with people - those who currently benefit from the services you deliver as well as people in the wider community who could potentially benefit from your new project - to actively involving people in the planning and delivery of your project. The key is that people are involved in a meaningful way and we will ask you to show how involving people has influenced the plans for your project, as well as their continued involvement in the delivery if the project is funded.

## Why involve people?

- We believe people should be leading on projects in improving their lives and their communities.
- Involving people also give them the opportunity to learn new skills and build confidence.
- Projects can then be shaped according to the requirements and views of the people that are involved and are going to benefit.
- There is a better chance that the project will be successful and that the effectiveness can be better monitored, addressing any issues and responding to feedback.

## Why might people not want to get involved?

- People are busy. They have lives, families and jobs and might not have the time to get involved in the design, delivery or review of projects.
- Some people might not feel comfortable enough to tell you what they think when you ask them directly. Some might not be prepared to say what they think in front of others.
- They might have been involved in projects before and felt their views and contributions were not valued, so they may not want to get involved again.

Tokenistic involvement can do more harm than not involving people at all. Therefore it is important to show people that they have been listened to and let them know what changes have been made to your plans as a result. If changes can't be made, you should take the time to explain why.

### **What does involving people look like?**

There is no 'one size fits all' approach to involving people in the design and delivery of projects. However people should be involved in a meaningful way. This will look different for different projects. However, it is important to provide an environment where people feel comfortable and safe to get involved.

- Involving people could include building relationships with people who take part in current projects you're providing, knocking on doors in the community, undertaking surveys, taking part in focus groups/committees - these are a few examples.
- You need to think beyond the usual group of people who are happy to be involved. Try and think of different ways to engage with people who don't usually take part in projects or give their views and opinions.
- Flexibility and creativity is the key - think beyond surveys and feedback forms.
- Be prepared to challenge your assumptions on people's skills, capabilities and experience.
- Consistent involvement from the same people is not always necessary. It is important to involve different people throughout the design, delivery and review of your project.
- Be upfront with people if several groups of people are going to be consulted and if they are going to have the chance to change how the project will be designed and delivered.

### **Things for you to consider when working with specific groups of people.**

- Whether you need to provide materials in alternative formats and languages. For example, when engaging with young people, you might want to be creative and use alternative media (e.g. video, social media, arts)
- In Wales, we expect you to involve and take into account the needs of Welsh language speakers in the design and delivery of projects.
- Cultural issues should be considered, for example some groups practice gender segregation in the delivery of projects. Or you may need to be aware of special holidays when engaging with people from ethnic minority communities and religious groups.
- Challenge your assumptions regarding someone's capability and interest in being involved.
- To involve certain groups of people in a meaningful way might mean that you need to get people with experience of working with that specific community to help. For example involving young children may require skills in creative material development and facilitation to get the most out of the session.

# Strength-based approach

We want projects to use our funding to support people and communities to build on the knowledge, skills and experience they already have to make the changes they want. A community could be a geographical community or a community of interest.

## What do we mean by strength-based approach?

- We want to encourage people and communities to think about what strengths they have, and how they can use and develop those strengths to make changes for themselves and their community.
- It focusses on the skills, assets and energy that people can draw upon rather than focusing on what people don't have.
- Every person in a community matters, and every person adds value. Everyone has something to offer including talents, abilities, relationships, skills, knowledge and even enthusiasm.
- We would like you to show that you will be using our grant to increase what is already strong rather than 'put right what is wrong'.
- It is about a community exploring what they care about to work together to change, develop or sustain. Given the appropriate tools and opportunity, small groups of people can change the things they believe needs changing better than anyone else.

## What are the key features of strength-based approaches?

- Identifying, building on and mobilising personal, local strengths and resources - people, time, skills, experience, knowledge - and mapping the capacities and skills of individuals, associations and organisations.
- Building supportive groups and networks, developing opportunities for meaningful engagement.
- Building and using local knowledge and experience to influence change, engaging people in decision making and building a community vision and plan to help define local priorities.
- Focussing on facilitating, enabling and empowering rather than only delivering projects.
- Connecting activities, investments and resources from outside the community to the existing strengths identified.

## What might this look like to you?

- The fact that you are thinking of contacting us about a project idea is building on a strength in itself - a desire and enthusiasm for something to change.
- Experts by experience! People may have previously experienced challenges that your project idea intends to address (for example; debt, isolation, alcohol misuse). Having those with experience directly involved in the project is an example of building on strengths.
- You could complete a community survey in order to identify individual strengths/experience that already exist. This could include be people with business skills, those with experience of organising activities, those with knowledge of working with specific groups of people.
- It could involve completing a community map to identify the organisations that already operate in the area, and how best to link and network with them.

# Connected approach

We want our applicants and projects to have a good understanding of other activities and services in their community and can show how their project will complement these.

## What do we mean by a connected approach?

- You need to have a good understanding of the activities and services in your community so that you can show how your idea, work and project works with and complements what already exists.
- A connected approach means that you understand and are using what you have learned from being both people-led and strength-based.
- You can think about being connected at two levels:
  - i. Being connected means that you know what the people you work with want and will use. If you are people-led you will have this knowledge. When groups are connected, they are using this information to make sure that what they want to do is appropriate and feasible.
  - ii. Being connected means that you know the community you work in. You know what services exist, what opportunities exist and you have a plan on how you can build on these opportunities.
- You usually cannot make connections until you know your strengths.

## What does being connected look like?

- There is no one way or one method.
- It can be informal links and activities like meeting with local people, the membership of a management committee or steering group.
- It can be working with other organisations from running activities together, by providing training or guidance to others, to using another organisation's building, transport or membership.
- We have seen that sometimes a partnership with other groups or statutory services is essential to creating a strong project that will reach people who need help the most.
- It can be more formal with a partnership agreement or delivering services through a contract or service level agreement. However, we do not require a formal partnership for the People and Places programme.
- We're not looking for a certain level of connection but for connections that make sense for your project and you can explain them to us.

### **What if you think there are no connections?**

- From our experience, every group is connected in some way and no group is working in isolation. Have a think about the work you do and the links you already have.
- We know that sometimes people and groups need to work more independently. For example, when working with sensitive issues such as people with addictions, ex-offenders, different sexual orientation, domestic violence. In these cases, there might be a need to work in a less integrated way within the wider community. However, you could show that your connections are on a more regional/national basis, working with other similar organisations to share learning and keep them informed of your work.

### **Why are you asking us to do this?**

- We need you to show that you know the community that you are working in and why your project makes sense to you and the community. We would expect you to know what similar services currently exist so that our funding is adding value and not duplicating what's already being provided.
- We want to know that you have made informed decisions on your approach, that you have considered the community and the people when you developed the project idea. By doing this there is more chance that what you plan to do will have a positive impact and be successful.