

**Community Support Alliance  
Test and Learn Agile Project Brief**  
23 April 2021

**Background**

In response to Covid-19, partners in Southwark established 'Community Hub' arrangements to support local people through the pandemic. This work enabled a leap forward in collaborative working across the Council, voluntary and community sector (VCS) and the NHS, it also highlighted the need to maximise the long-term legacy of this work for the people of our borough in a sustainable way.

Following the review of the community hub response in 2020 and resulting Cabinet decision to take forward 16 key recommendations (see Appendix 3), a cross-partner coordination group has been established to support implementation, through the Community Support Alliance (CSA).

**Introduction**

The recent Coordination meeting (10/03/2021) was an interactive session to discuss the vision and priorities of the Community Support Alliance. All attendants took part in five breakout rooms, were facilitated by a chair that was involved in the review of the Community Hub in July 2020.

Each group had 20 minutes to discuss the following questions:

1. **The Community Hub review set out a long-term vision, “to build a borough where everyone can contribute” and captured three commitments:**
  - No one should be prevented from realising their aspirations and playing a meaningful role in their community because of challenges such as poverty, food security, suitable housing or debt;
  - We will provide platforms for residents and communities to support one another, celebrating the mutuality and reciprocity that has flourished through this period.
  - As partners, we will bring our collective resources to the table to build this vision for the borough.

**Does this still resonate and is there anything missing?**

2. **What do you currently see as the biggest gaps and/or pressures in the support offered to vulnerable people in Southwark as we come out of this most recent lockdown?**
3. **What opportunities do you see for better partnership-working and co-location of services? Do you have any examples that you would like to share of where this is already working well? e.g. through local food hubs, or from examples outside of Southwark**
4. **What would you like to see the Alliance prioritise if we were to seek additional external funding?**
5. **What additional evidence / data / research will we need as an Alliance?**

Here is a summary of emerging themes from each discussion to help inform the project planning:

Question	Summary of discussion:
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The overall vision was seen as too broad and very high level and strategic. Which may need to be narrowed a little to allow stakeholders and partners to understand their role within the Community Support Alliance.</li> </ul>
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All groups mentioned that there is an expected increase in demand on Mental Health services and that there will be an unmet need.</li> <li>▪ It is perceived that there will be issues with those reintegrating into society who have been shielding and have high levels of anxiety.</li> </ul>

**Author**

Project Manager Community Hub

## Community Support Alliance – Appendix Two

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access to information and clear signposting of information – is a huge problem, where holding information in a physical space, is restricted and those that are not digitally competent or have access to digital means, will miss out on key information.</li> </ul>
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There are hubs services such as the Aging well hub that provide both Borough wide and neighbourhood access. These hubs could be repurposed to provide support to the people with the most complex needs that are potentially moving through various different services.</li> <li>▪ The Neighbourhood food model presents a good opportunity to fund and test in other sites, south of the borough or another place, along with other existing wrap around services.</li> <li>▪ Making better use of technology and integration of services and customer journeys.</li> </ul>
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There are a number of gaps in data, leading to a strong case to pool data together and improve data sharing within the council and across different sectors.</li> <li>▪ The neighbourhood model is the way to start, supporting people who are living in your area and complimented with a directory of Services will be a good way to bring in one focal point.</li> <li>▪ Building resilience was raised in a number of groups and how can we support and provide better services that enable residents to support themselves for the long term.</li> </ul>
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A mapping of key services is required, to understand where gaps are within service provision(s).</li> <li>▪ Establishing an intelligence hub is required, to enable better data collection and to build upon a good evidence base for further intervention(s). This would support the lack of knowledge on those people that have NRPF and are accessing the smaller organisations in order to get their essential needs met.</li> <li>▪ Ensuring that the Alliance includes the work that is happening within other wider strategies such as Southwark Stands Together</li> </ul>

### The Approach (How)

Building on the *Principles for Working Together (Recommendation 15)*, we propose an agile test-and-learn approach (see figure two) to developing the Community Support Alliance (CSA) which will provide clarity on the tangible outcomes we will deliver together in 2021/22 and shape the operating model and approach that will underpin a successful CSA. This will require a tight cross-sector project team that can work at pace to build out test sites and activities that can inform the direction of the wider programme – including reporting to the wider coordination group for comment and direction.

A number of the recommendations set out in the Community Hub review document touched on areas of work that are being taken forward in other parts of the system – including food insecurity with SFAA through the basket work, health inequalities via the strategy and Southwark Stands Together and social prescribing via the Southwark social prescribing network hosted by Community Southwark.

In the next phase, appropriate lines of connectivity will be identified with these inter-related projects; and test-and-learn activities will be focused on developing the unique offer, scope and function of the Community Support Alliance.

The following recommendations will be tested and implemented as part of the Test and Learn – Walworth neighbourhood project: (See Appendix 3 for the 16 recommendations)

- 4, 5,6,7
- 10, 11, 12, 13
- 14, 15 and 16

## Community Support Alliance – Appendix Two

We will target those populations where we know there is the greatest inequality and ensure that we take an experience-based insight and co-design approach with residents to ensure the development of the CSA delivers tangible impact for people's health and wellbeing.

### In scope: (Target audience)

- Families and those aged 19 years of age plus, that access food hubs via the Community Hub or the local neighbourhood distribution hub.
- Those that get referred from the Community hub on to the two Food Hubs.
- Those that live xxx (Walworth and xxx postcode) and use the two proposed Food Hubs.
- Recruit 50 residents / users.
  - **Month One:** 20 – 30 residents to understand the current customer journey and service offers.
  - **Month Two:** 20 – 30 residents to understand and analyse the changes and adaptations that the first cohort of residents and users have suggested to change and improve the customer journey and service offers.

### Out of scope:

Isolated Children and those under the age of 19. They must be part of a family, where the majority are using the services, such as the parents or guardians.

### The Project (what)

To deliver on our aspiration to build a “borough where everyone can contribute and no-one gets left behind”, activity will be focussed at a neighbourhood and borough level (recognising that while delivery is best placed at a hyper-local level, there will be elements of coordination and information sharing that make sense to do at scale).

#### (i) Neighbourhood-level

The emerging Walworth Neighbourhood Food Model offers a clear opportunity to test new approaches and activities rapidly. At least one other neighbourhood will be selected (to be decided) to test activities alongside Walworth, with the aim of identifying clear common features and principles of neighbourhood-working that can be adopted across the borough through the Community Support Alliance.

#### Work areas:

- Transition: Creating a clear road map to step-down emergency food bank provision and develop whole-neighbourhood offers that incorporate pantries, community kitchens and co-ops
- Neighbourhood services: Testing new service models that are embedded in community settings (including existing food offers) and that address the root causes of food insecurity, e.g. debt-, employment-, housing-support through wrap-around support.
- Neighbourhood front-doors: Developing social infrastructure in neighbourhoods that provide opportunities for residents to connect and routes into available services, incl. building on the “Walworth Living Room” model and applying this to the local context
- Neighbourhood connectivity: Testing new ways of working between health, council, voluntary and community sector organisations/groups and local residents to reduce fragmentation, duplication and improve cross-boundary collaboration to make better use of the skills, resources and energy in local communities.
- Sustainability: Developing longer-term financing plans for neighbourhood models, incl. building on community wealth-building principles to develop new social enterprise models and local procurement options

#### Author

Project Manager Community Hub

. The outputs of this test and learn will also inform what type of infrastructure/approach is needed within the Community Support Alliance to sustain and scale the approach across Southwark as a whole.

## (ii) Borough-wide

The pandemic demonstrated the importance of close coordination between neighbourhood and borough-wide initiatives. In the next phase, test-and-learn activities at the borough-level will build on the shared-intelligence and information-sharing that was effective during the emergency phase, as well as the successes of the Covid-19 emergency phone-line and mailbox.

Work areas:

- **Virtual front door:** Building a proof of concept for a borough-wide virtual 'front door' that is clearly branded and staffed by a cross-sector team as a legacy to the emergency phone-line and mailbox of the Covid-19 Community Hub
- **Volunteers:** Developing a new online portal for volunteering, building on the refresh of the volunteering strategy.
- **Intelligence:** Building a core analytics function for the CSA, ensuring that neighbourhood and borough-wide intelligence continues to be shared quickly and effectively – supporting improved services and offers for local residents and mitigate against duplication/people falling through the gaps.

### Aim:

The overall aim is for these test-and-learn activities to help refine the future goals and operating model of the CSA, and inform decisions around future resource requirements to support this (recognising that this may be using resources differently as well as bringing inward investment in).

To facilitate this, this test and learn phase will focus on:

### Objectives:

1. **Core capabilities:** Understanding the common features and key enablers of both neighbourhood and borough-wide initiatives. Understand what is needed, where the current gaps are and how these might be addressed through capacity and capability building.
2. **User journeys:** Mapping of service user journey's based on current pathways, and as we begin to test new models, in line with the overarching vision and strategic objectives.
3. **Interoperability:** Developing the capacity to share data, intelligence and referrals more easily by focussing on interoperability of systems, rather than a single database solution.
4. **Outcomes:** Reviewing data sets and intelligence to develop outcomes that matter to people, and seek to feed these into test and learns and CSA development so we can clearly demonstrate progress and impact.
5. **Culture and Workforce development:** Building cross-sector teams that develop shared understanding and efficiency by working together on shared tasks and with common purpose. While upskilling workforces and volunteers to provide a more holistic approach.

### Project Deliverables set to achieve by end of Month x 2021

(Example) year-long neighbourhood deliverables:

Walworth:

- 1-2-1 and group engagement of those on the emergency lists – building intelligence and developing transition plans
- Pilots of pantry and food co-op models in operation
- Pilots of advice in community-settings at Aylesbury Kitchen (later to move to WLR)
- Town centre venue identified and secured for The Front Room

Author

Project Manager Community Hub

## Community Support Alliance – Appendix Two

- Capital programme finalised for new Neighbourhood Hub at the WLR (including co-location of health, council and VCS services)
- Refurbished WLR opens – with co-location of services and personnel

## Neighbourhood 2:

- Identify neighbourhood based on energy, need and assets
- Capacity building of convening organisation
- Setup of pop-up neighbourhood front door
- Small-scale pilots of community service provision
- Engagement plan and activities in place to build network
- TBC

## Borough:

- A summary report of recommendations for a borough wide approach and how other neighbourhoods can be mobilised and deliver a similar model
- Proof of concept of virtual front door
- New volunteering portal in place, with
- A Co-designed Service offer

## Project Timelines (when)

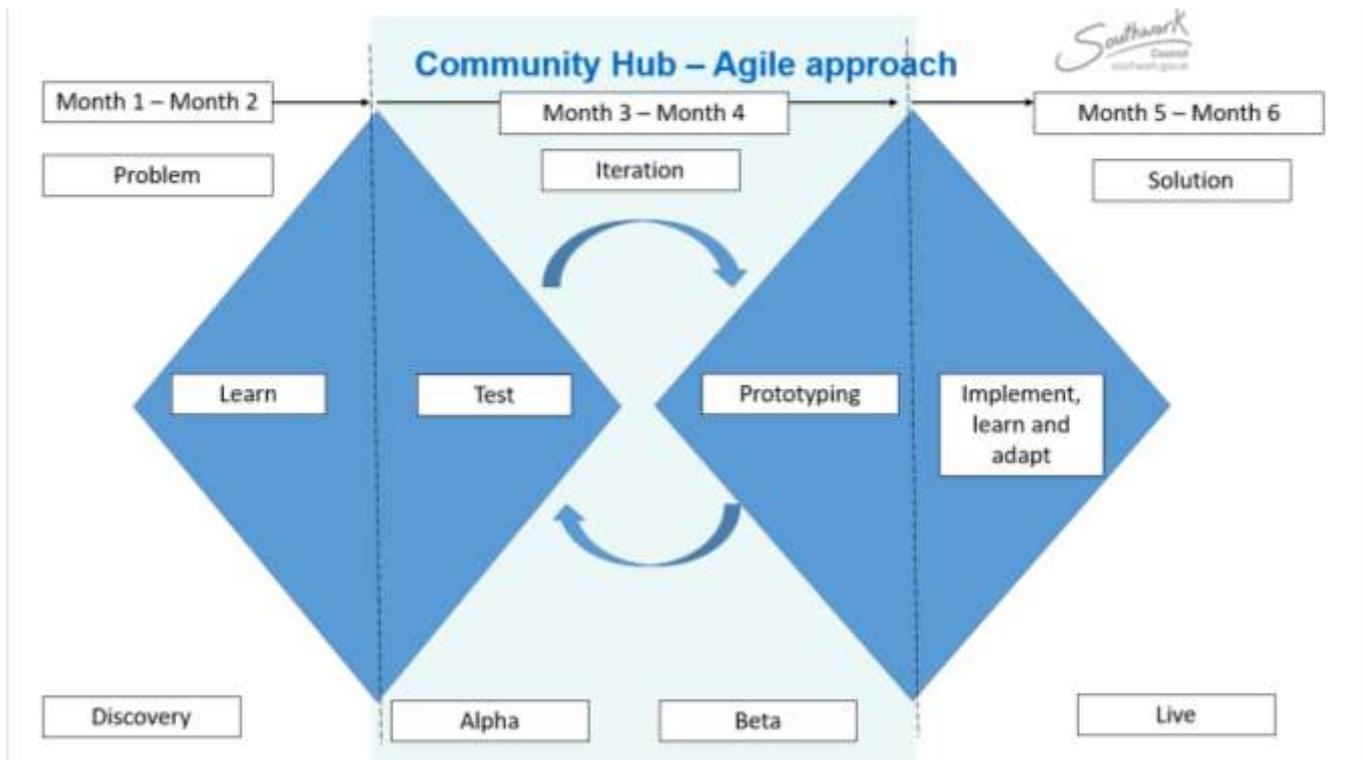
See figure one



See Figure two

## Author

Project Manager Community Hub



### Agile approach:

#### Problem:

- To define and identify what the current problems are within the 'customer journey'. This could be data sharing and transfer of resident information. Or gaps in support and residents 'dropping' out of the support services.

#### Iteration:

- Understanding the common features and key enablers of neighbourhood initiatives and test these out in both localities.
- Test out how workforce developments affect the customer journey
- Implement and test the suggestions and solutions to the problems that were highlighted in the first phase, that the residents / users of the services have proposed
- Analyse the data flows and how this adaptations have affected the new cohort of residents / users

#### Possible Solutions:

- Using the learnings from the Iteration phase and what has worked well within both neighbourhood areas. A customer journey map will be presented and shared with all key stakeholders including service users, to be approved.

### Project milestones: (dates to be revised)

Start Date: Month 1 2021

Key milestones:

12th Month 1 – Project team meeting

19th Month 1 - Data processes and project initiation with support from the Community Hub Customer advisor team.

#### Author

Project Manager Community Hub

Community Support Alliance – Appendix Two

4th Month 2 – first data tracking responses and feedback from residents, to help inform what the current problems and gaps are within the services and what the possible solutions could be. The first Co-creation group meeting.

12th Month 2 – first feedback and update meeting with CSA Coordination team

19th Month 2 - Second focus and insight group meeting with residents and users to present what they highlighted as problems and then share for feedback on the proposed customer journey

26th Month 2 - Further drafting of the customer journey and co-designed service offer

2nd Month 3 – Further analysis of data tracking from the second revised co-designed service offer

9th Month 3 – Third focus and insight meeting with residents and users to share the revised co-designed service offer

16th Month 3 - second feedback and update with CSA Coordination team

23rd Month 3 - Further analysis of data tracking from the second revised co-designed service offer

30th Month 3 – Final meeting with all stakeholders, to share learnings and proposals for further testing and implementation

Proposed completion date: 31/ Month 4 /2021

**Project team (Who)** (needs adding too – especially neighbourhood teams)

- Stephen Douglass: Director, Communities, Southwark Council
- Hayley Ormandy, Programme Director, Partnership Southwark
- Chris Mikala-Pralat, Chief Executive, Community Southwark
- Mike Wilson, Executive Director, Pembroke House
- Ross Diamond, Chief Executive, Age UK Lewisham and Southwark
- Jo Stead, Head of Digital – Public Health, Southwark Council
- Food Hub Lead for site to be determined
- Juliette Danquah, Community Hub Operations, Southwark Council
- Andrew Farquhar, Together for Mental Wellbeing
- Eugene Nixon, Head of Strategy & Compliance, Finance and Governance, Southwark Council
- Rosie Dalton Lucas, Head of programmes (healthy place), Public Health, Southwark Council

## **Governance**

The project group, will be informed and guided by number of key partners and enablers. However, will provide written Bi-weekly updates and meet on a monthly to update and inform the CSA Coordination group.

## **Figure three**

### **Author**

Project Manager Community Hub



**Considerations:**

**Resource Requirements**

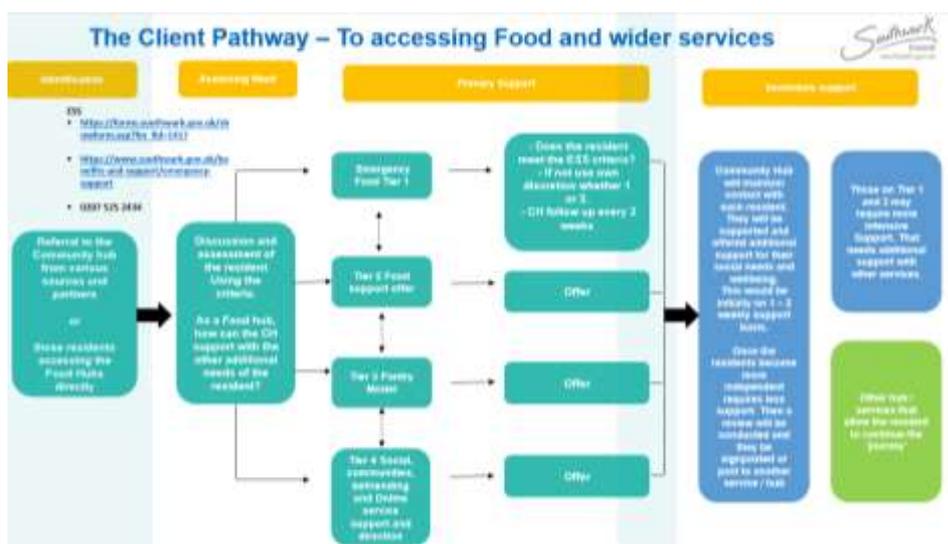
- There has been £100K allocated to the Community Support Alliance by Southwark Council and there will be £100K from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) provided grant funding for those Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) residents. The purpose of the MHCLG grant is to provide support to local authorities in England towards expenditure lawfully incurred or to be incurred by them in support of CEV residents during the national restrictions.

**Risks and mitigating actions**

Risks to the successful completion of the project	Mitigating actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not enough time to consult and meet with key stakeholders and residents</li> </ul>	<p>The Community Hub – holds over 20,000 resident details and can contact residents that have previously used the services</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not enough feedback from users of the services</li> </ul>	<p>As above. But as shielding ends on 31<sup>st</sup> March the team of CSOs will have enough time and resource to get feedback from a large pool of residents.</p> <p>Could also wider the usage to other services or food hubs.</p> <p>Will check on how many users have used the proposed neighbourhoods to check whether the project team can recruit enough residents.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pathway does not reflect all service and user needs</li> </ul>	<p>There are three proposed focus and insight group sessions, to enable all residents recruited for this project to provide feedback. Also as the project</p>

	<p>progresses the team would like to recruit a few residents in to the project team.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There isn't enough provision for those in need</li> </ul>	<p>There is currently a large amount of funding available from various sources that would benefit from this project and the possible findings. The Food insecurity, the CSA project work, Shielding funding from Central Government and Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) funding.</p>

Figure four / appendix 1



Appendix 2

Summary of the 16 Recommendations:

**Recommendation 1 – A Managed Transition:** That all partners put in place a managed transition for people supported by the Covid-19 Community Hub, stepping down support where it is no longer needed and ensuring people who need ongoing assistance are matched with the appropriate support.

**Recommendation 2 – The Emergency Operating Model:** The council and partners should agree a Covid-19 community support plan that sets out the emergency operating model in the event of a further spike in Covid-19 or a further lockdown.

**(i) Governing Recommendation: Building a Borough where everyone can contribute**

**Recommendation 3 – A new alliance:** The council, VCS and health partners should work together to strengthen and further develop a Southwark community support alliance. This should be focused on providing social support that delivers long-term reductions in inequality, combining resources, building on the successes of the Community Hub, and founded on the vision, outcomes, principles and framework set out below.

**(ii) Recommendations on related work**

The issues raised at the review group have been wide-ranging and has touched on a range of issues that relate to work taken forward by other groups and initiatives. Here we set out a range of recommendations

Community Support Alliance – Appendix Two  
that would bring these work streams into line with the framework and vision of our governing recommendation.

**Recommendation 4 - Embedding services in neighbourhoods:** Partners should embed access to existing service provision within neighbourhoods. This should include testing new ways of providing housing, employment, skills, money, social care and immigration support in local communities – including testing how support from established public & VCS providers can be made accessible in partnership with local community ‘anchor’ organisations rooted in each part of the borough.

**Recommendation 5 – Making the Most of Social Prescribing:** Health partners should explore how social prescribing can become a central element of the community support alliance.

**Recommendation 6 – Building effective referral systems:** The council, VCS and health partners should develop and embed a social support referral system– building on the success of the work Community Southwark have been leading using the Airtable platform.

**Recommendation 7 – Encouraging and Supporting Volunteering:** The review recognised the significant role that volunteers have played in supporting vulnerable people in the borough. The review group recommends that Community Southwark should work with partners to find ways to celebrate and support volunteering.

**Recommendation 8 – Aligning plans for emergency food provision:**

Partners should work with the Southwark Food Action Alliance to develop a stronger common approach to emergency food provision, including establishing aligned criteria/thresholds, ways of avoiding duplication of service to individual people and shared relationships with food suppliers.

**Recommendation 9 - Developing a common long-term approach to tackling food insecurity:** Partners should scale up community run low cost food projects - working through the Southwark Food Action Alliance to develop options for affordable food provision that support people’s dignity and independence (including community supermarkets, pantries etc.), linked to the review of the food security plan.

**Recommendation 10 – Understanding Southwark’s hidden populations:** Research should be undertaken to better understand Southwark’s population who do not have full recourse to public funds – to identify the scale of the population and the issues they face. Working with the VCS groups that are currently supporting large number of people in this situation to undertake the research.

**Recommendation 11 – Tackling Digital Exclusion:** There is an urgent need to prioritise connecting digitally excluded people, including identifying how access to devices and data can be improved for people who cannot currently afford them and strengthening digital skills.

**Recommendation 12 – Supporting grassroots organisations:** Community Southwark should review how capacity building support in the borough can best support the development of Southwark social/ community support alliance together with development/implementation of a formal partnership model of delivery with Voluntary and Community Sector organisations.

**Recommendation 13 – Leveraging existing funds:** Funders in Southwark and beyond should consider how they can best use their existing resources to support the delivery of these recommendations.

**Recommendation 14 – Tackling inequalities:** The review group heard evidence on the significant disproportionate impact on some communities. The review therefore recommends that all partners should:

- Undertake joint work to understand those who were and remain worst affected by Covid-19, for example BAME groups.
- Improve the way they collect, use and act on data moving forward, covering all equalities groups.

**Recommendation 15 – Principles for working together:**

The partnership

Should adopt the following principles in working together:

**Author**

Project Manager Community Hub

## Community Support Alliance – Appendix Two

- Mutuality and reciprocity – people and organisations contributing what they can as well as receiving support when they need it.
- Co-design – all partners and residents working together to design the alliance and share approaches and tools.
- Clarity of purpose - working to a clear common purpose.
- Collective resources – working to make the best uses of the resources we have in Southwark across the system and across all partners.
- Operations not just strategy – getting on with practical work together across the system.
- Relationships and communication - a partnership of equals across sectors.
- Data and technology - Effective use of data and intelligence to achieve more.
- Both this and recommendation 16 are key enablers to the longer-term approach.

**Recommendation 16 – Principles for providing support:** The partnership should adopt the following principles for providing support moving forward:

- Mutuality and reciprocity – people and communities contributing what they can as well as receiving support when they need it, and being valued for what they contribute.
- People are fully involved in identifying their needs and planning the support they receive.
- People have the opportunity to build on their strengths – planning of support helps individuals to identify their strengths at a personal and community level.
- People have access to the information, advice and guidance they need to meet their needs.
- People feel that they have access to services and less formal groups that improve their lives and wellbeing.