crew

Atmosphere, Landscape and Horizon:

A Regeneration Impact Assessment Toolkit

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CONTENTS

Why Use This Toolkit?

This toolkit has been designed to provide a detailed understanding of life in a community. You might use it to establish a baseline measurement before you implement a programme of regeneration or you can use it to assess the impact of recent regeneration activity. Understanding the conditions in a locality before interventions commence is essential if you are to fully understand what effect policies and programmes are having. Regular monitoring of programmes as they are delivered is equally essential if they are to remain on track and meet intended objectives. Finally, an assessment of the impact of a programme when it ends will allow judgements to be made of its success or failure which can inform future delivery and also encourages the development of good practice. Understanding the impact of activities at community level is an essential ingredient in delivering positive change. This toolkit combines statistical sources with local knowledge to develop a comprehensive understanding of what is happening at community level.

These objectives will become increasingly important as the adoption of Results Based Accounting becomes conditional for a wide range of Welsh Government funding programmes and initiatives. The central concern of RBA is to demonstrate actual impact. The ALH Toolkit can provide clear methods for achieving this.

1.1 WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOLKIT?

This toolkit has been designed to be as universally applicable as possible, to allow all community groups and organisations to be able to identify key issues in their community and design targeted regeneration schemes. An example of those expected to utilise this toolkit are:

- Regeneration Practitioners
- Unitary Authorities
- Town and Community Councils
- Registered Social Landlords
- Housing Associations
- Development Trusts
- Communities First Teams (Local and cluster levels)
- Community Groups

1.2 WHAT IS REGENERATION?

Regeneration means different things to different people; however at its core regeneration is about redeveloping and improving places, and making life better for the residents who live there. Regeneration is usually focused on areas of deprivation where there might be multiple problems. Regeneration programmes often combine physical improvements to a neighbourhood with social and economic interventions that help local people improve their quality of life. Holistic and integrated regeneration approaches combine physical and social interventions to promote improved health, educational and employment outcomes. The framework provided in this toolkit allows us to make sense of complex and difficult social issues and to assess whether we are achieving the improvements that we have set out to achieve.

CREW promotes holistic, integrated regeneration which tries to address the full range of problems that exist at community level. These might include poor housing, low health and educational attainment and low levels of economic activity. It tries to do this in ways that are environmentally sustainable. Our vision is of low carbon communities with a high quality of life for all residents where everyone can achieve their full potential. Central to this vision is the relationship between people and place.

1.3 WHAT CAN REGENERATION TARGET?

As successful regeneration has to tackle the specific problems of an area no two regeneration projects are ever the same. Here are some examples of what regeneration schemes can target:

- The Environment
- Transport
- Access to services
- Housing
- Jobs
- Skills
- Education
- Aspirations and Culture
- Leisure and Entertainment
- Health
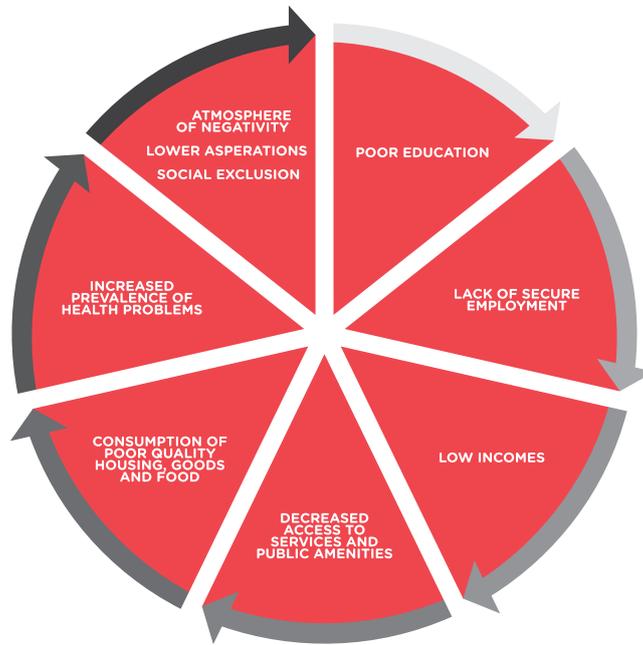
FIG 1.1 The Impact of Poverty

1.4 HOW DO WE THINK ABOUT POVERTY AND DISADVANTAGE?

Poverty is a complex concept. We associate absolute poverty with under-developed nations where famine, war or economic conditions prevent access to basic requirements for life such as food, shelter, education and medical care. Here in the UK we think more in terms of relative poverty where we measure against the average for the nation as a whole. Usually someone is judged to be living in poverty if they have an income of less than 60% of the national average income. Regrettably in Wales we have large numbers of people living at such income levels. There are also considerable concentrations of poverty where whole communities experience similar economic conditions. Whilst the number of people experiencing poverty changes as government policy changes, for most of recent decades the poverty rate in Wales has been around 25%, one quarter of the population, amounting to about 700,000 people. Over 200,000 of those are children (JRF 2011).

Most people think of poverty and its consequences as fundamentally a lack of money but we also have to understand a wide range of issues that can also be identified with living in poor and disadvantaged communities. We are more concerned in this Toolkit with understanding the total experience of living in a poor or disadvantaged community. We would identify the strong connections between:

- Income poverty
- Poor quality housing
- Low educational attainment
- Poor health
- Economic inactivity

Put simply we think of poverty as 'the lived experience of poverty' – the totality of effects resulting from living as a poor person in a poor neighbourhood. This pattern of disadvantage is sometimes referred to as social exclusion as the conditions of poverty can prevent people participating fully in society and result in their exclusion from key aspects of life such as good housing, high educational attainment and good health.

Poverty is not about statistics, it's about the day to day experiences of living with deprivation. The Toolkit provides a methodology for measuring and assessing the extent of these social issues and whether the regeneration programmes we develop are having a positive effect.

Most regeneration programmes attempt to intervene in the circumstances which reproduce poverty over time, where self-reinforcing cycles of related issues can make it very difficult to eradicate poverty and disadvantage at community level. The above diagram indicates how the issues discussed so far are inter-related and can lead to a vicious circle of poverty and social exclusion.

TOOLKIT TIP

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation publishes regular updates of poverty and social exclusion in the UK. Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are reported on separately and you will find their publication Monitoring Poverty and Social exclusion In Wales very useful. The latest report is dated July 2011 and you can find it in the resources section.

1.5 HOW HAS POVERTY TRADITIONALLY BEEN MEASURED?

In policy-making terms poverty is usually thought of as a standardised measure of income poverty. As seen earlier, if a person's income falls below 60% of the British median income, that person is defined as living in poverty. However, recent research for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that for many household types, that threshold was considerably lower than what most ordinary people would consider to be enough income to enjoy a reasonable standard of living which they would find acceptable. They have developed instead a Minimum Standard of Living (JRF, 2008, A minimum income standard for Britain: What people think) which suggests that you would need more than 60% of the average UK income to enjoy a satisfactory life enjoying some of the things most people take for granted. As described above, poverty is a social, economic and cultural problem, which causes a negative self-reinforcing cycle of marginalization and exclusion. These processes represent the way that poverty is experienced and we need to capture that full experience in the way we measure the impact of regeneration initiatives.

- This toolkit is designed to as fully as possible capture the 'lived experience of poverty' in communities experiencing poverty, deprivation or exclusion not simply the statistical evidence of income poverty

- However, this measure is designed for use in communities, localities and neighbourhoods and cannot be applied to assess poverty on a larger scale.

In Wales, over a quarter of the population are not participating fully in the economic, social and cultural life of the nation. The daily experience of life is far different to the 'average' daily life that most people take for granted. It is these differences that define poverty for those experiencing it. This toolkit has been designed to allow communities and regeneration practitioners to identify the problems affecting a community, develop targeted regeneration plans and monitor what progress is achieved. By providing a method of assessing the impacts of regeneration initiatives we will be able to establish what works and what doesn't in terms of area-based regeneration and ultimately improve regeneration practises.

1.6 WHY THE FOCUS ON COMMUNITIES?

Since the late twentieth century experts have identified significant evidence of major concentrations of poverty both regionally, and locally. Major concentrations are evident in local authority housing estates on the outskirts of British cities and in areas like the South Wales Valleys. Where these concentrations of poverty exist, additional social effects are evident as whole neighbourhoods become stigmatised and excluded by wider society.

In Britain, socially excluded people are often associated primarily with benefit dependency, low incomes, criminality, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse. These negative stereotypes develop to stigmatise whole communities in a pattern of social exclusion which makes it difficult for residents to achieve well in education, secure employment, access credit, secure public services and enjoy public amenities. Many communities in Wales have become characterised by this phenomenon of social exclusion. Along with the problems mentioned, socially excluded communities in Wales are characterised by difficult to-let housing, physical degradation and low social expectations. Most fundamentally, these communities are treated with disdain by the wider society and a clear pattern of 'post-code prejudice' emerges to stigmatise and exclude these communities. It is only by tackling this social exclusion that we can hope to reintegrate our marginalised communities into wider society and begin to eradicate place specific instances of extreme poverty, thus poverty as a whole.

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poverty is more
difficult to define
and to measure.

1.7 RURAL POVERTY

In rural settings poverty is more difficult to define and to measure. Because of the generally lower population, people experiencing poverty are less in number and tend to be dispersed more. It is difficult to identify the same concentrations of poverty as evident in more urban settings. As a consequence poverty can be a more isolating experiencing for those experiencing it in rural communities. As a result of the dispersal factor standardised measures of poverty such as the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) tend to more clearly identify urban poverty and do not fully reveal the conditions of rural poverty. It is also more difficult in rural areas to design regeneration programmes based on the connection between poor people and places. Interventions have to be more carefully targeted at specific social groups and may be delivered over much larger spatial areas. For example, in Ceredigion and Powys the Communities First programme has been delivered in ways which connect multiple communities.

This different pattern of poverty in rural areas presents challenges to the use of this toolkit. However, pockets of poverty in rural communities can be identified and the Toolkit will be as effective there as in more urban situations. Concentrations of poverty can be seen in rural towns especially in council or ex-council estates. There is a strong connection between poverty and social housing generally. It is also the case that towns with more affluent histories tend to have large houses suitable for conversion to multiple occupation and these tend to attract lower income individuals and families. In both these contexts the Toolkit will be applicable. It is more difficult to establish how it will be useful in areas of deep rurality where population dispersal will make many of the statistical sources less relevant and where even some of the community audit based methods will find it difficult to reach a critical mass.

1.8 WHAT DOES THE ATMOSPHERE, LANDSCAPE, AND HORIZON (ALH) TOOLKIT DO?

Conventionally, Community Audits or Appraisal methods involve the compilation of a wide range of data drawn from official statistics and locally collected information. The ALH Toolkit provides a clear method for doing this but also adds an evaluative framework which allows you to organise your data in ways which reflect the community experience and are relevant and meaningful to local residents. Importantly, the Toolkit combines two types of information specific instances of extreme poverty, thus poverty as a whole.

QUANTATIVE INDICATORS are defined as measures of quantity, such as the number of crimes in a community in a year, the number of young adults not in education, employment or training or the number of people claiming benefits in a community. These indicators capture the statistical nature of poverty in a community and can be used to monitor change over time. Quantitative indicators generally deal with verifiable facts

QUALITATIVE INDICATORS are defined as people's judgments and perceptions on a subject, such as the feelings of safety after dark in a community, how satisfied people are with their neighbourhood as a place to live or how often people interact with their neighbours. Qualitative indicators are generally expressions of opinion or experience and are not always factual. For example it is possible to have a low fear of crime in a high crime area.

2

Atmosphere, Landscape & Horizon

The patterns of disadvantage in Wales require a process of regeneration able to tackle physical renewal alongside significant inequalities in housing, health and education. To facilitate this process, the concepts of Landscape, Horizon and Atmosphere have been developed to enable accurate community-level appraisals that attempt to capture holistically the lived experience of poverty. Based on an initial concept implemented in a study conducted on behalf of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the ALH Framework employs the three concepts of Atmosphere, Landscape and Horizon, which can be seen as a metaphor about the quality of place. The terms are borrowed from tourism and are derived from the three key features of a place which define it for outsiders (Adamson 2010). These have been implemented in a research exercise which has identified specific indicators and methodologies. If you would like to read more about this research exercise you can do so at www.regenwales.org. Finally, the use of the framework has been trialled in a study of open spaces conducted by Rhondda Cynon Taff Housing in association with Hyder Consulting and we are very grateful for their contribution to the development of this Toolkit version.

The following section introduces the Atmosphere, Landscape and Horizon Concepts.

2.1 ATMOSPHERE

'Atmosphere' refers to the 'feel' of a place. Is it somewhere you would like to live? Is it welcoming or hostile? Does it feel safe or dangerous? Do residents have a sense of identity, and is that positive or negative? Is it a tight-knit community or one fractured by difference and inequality? Is it a community respected by others or stigmatised for crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse? All these issues are key parts of the regeneration process. When we regenerate a place, we make it somewhere that's good to live and where residents feel pride and a sense of belonging.

2.2 LANDSCAPE

The 'Landscape' of a place reflects its physical characteristics and the ways in which they influence the quality of life for those who live there. It is about the structure and design of the built environment and the public realm. What is the housing quality and its appearance? What is the housing density and distribution? Are there green spaces and gardens, and are they well kept and attractive? Are there play and sports spaces, and functional public spaces which contribute positively to the atmosphere of the community? Are there services required by residents for shopping, learning, health and well being, and exercise? Is the community well connected internally by good roads and paths, and externally by transport links and information technologies?

2.3 HORIZON

The 'Horizon' of a community describes the sense of social horizon experienced by residents. It is concerned with cultural and psychological horizons, and the ways in which residents orientate themselves towards the external world. Are they empowered to interact with the wider social and economic world, or is life restricted to the community by low educational attainment, worklessness and lack of confidence? Do residents travel outside for work, leisure and learning or are they trapped by low aspirations within a peer culture which is passive and lacks direction? Most fundamentally, is there social provision which builds bridges to the outside worlds of employment, education and healthy living?
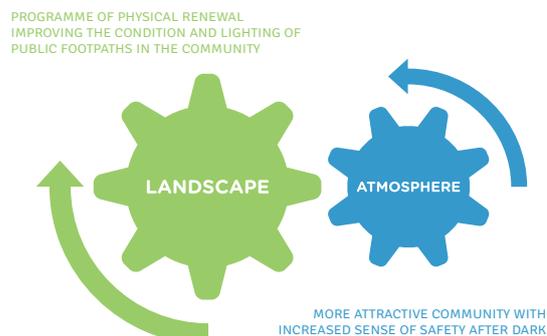
PROGRAMME OF PHYSICAL RENEWAL
IMPROVING THE CONDITION AND LIGHTING OF
PUBLIC FOOTPATHS IN THE COMMUNITY

LANDSCAPE   ATMOSPHERE

MORE ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITY WITH
INCREASED SENSE OF SAFETY AFTER DARK

FIG 2.1 The Cog Effect

2.4 THE COG EFFECT

Whilst these three concepts are unique with each representing a different aspect of the lived experience of poverty, the concepts should not be thought of as completely separate from one another. For instance, a programme of physical renewal of public spaces in a local area would primarily be aimed at improving the Landscape of that area but would also impact upon the feel of an area, thus changing the Atmosphere. This is due to the interconnected nature of the Atmosphere, Landscape and Horizon concept. Much like poverty itself, the concept is multi-faceted with subtle links between each, and all, of the themes. The concepts of Atmosphere, Landscape and Horizon are all linked and best thought of as cogs in a machine; turning one cog impacts upon another cog simultaneously. The easiest way to understand this idea is visually, as shown in Fig 2.1.

Although an obvious example of how the two concepts interact its does provide a logical picture of how the concepts are linked, and how they interact on a daily basis in our communities. Moreover, thinking about these concepts in terms of their cog linkages is a very important idea for the usefulness of the Atmosphere, Landscape and Horizon toolkit. This thinking is the first step towards understanding the complex nature of poverty in our marginalised communities and beginning to develop an understanding of how to fully tackle this poverty.

Although a useful introduction to the Cog Effect, the example shown above undoubtedly ignores the complexities of the lived experience of poverty, as well as those of the regeneration processes attempting to tackle poverty. A second example using
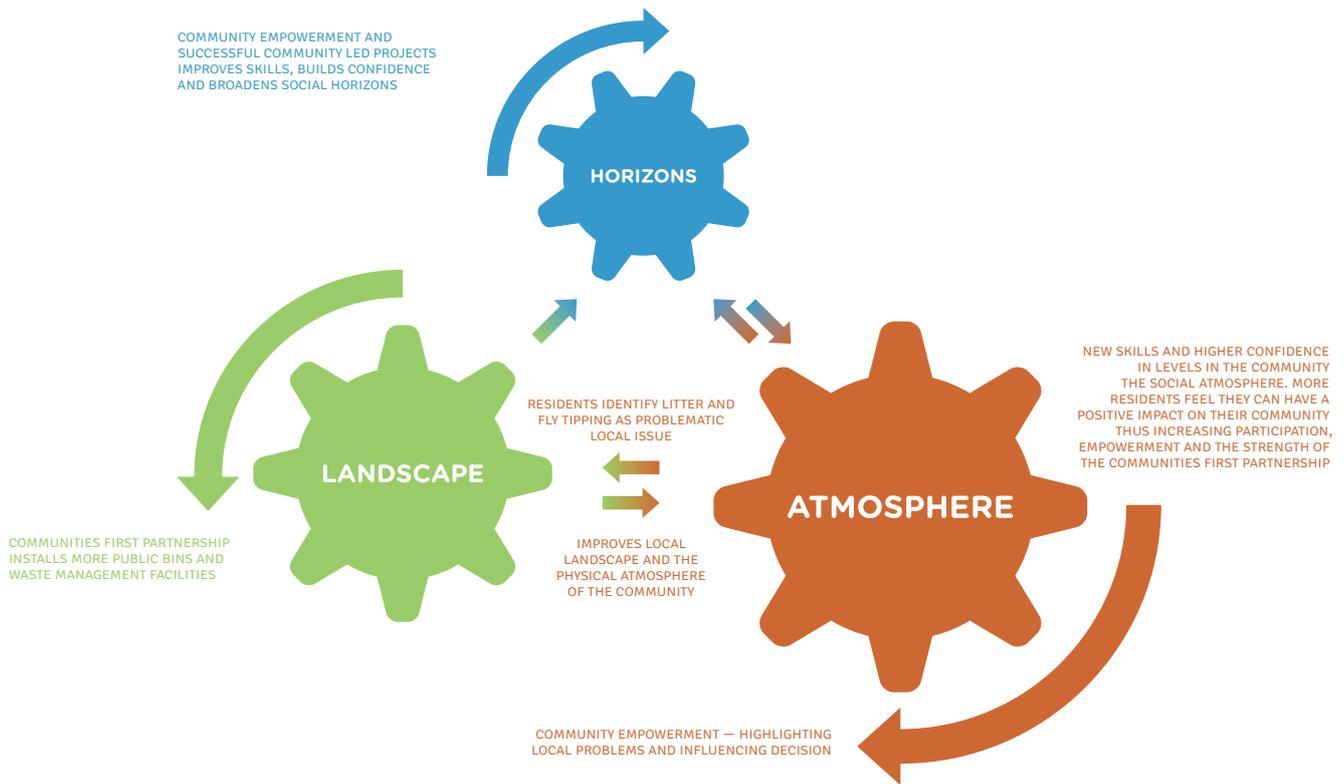
FIG 2.2 Large Scale Atmosphere, Landscape and Horizon Cog Effects of Communities First

Communities First partnerships may provide a useful insight. The Communities First scheme was based on the idea of community engagement and granting the community an active role in the regeneration process. At the heart of programme in each area is the Communities First partnership. This brings voluntary sector, public sector and community representation together within a 'three thirds model'. By facilitating a process of community empowerment a more positive community orientated Atmosphere is created. However as Fig 2.2 above explains, the improved Atmosphere has Cog Effects on Landscape and Horizon, which in turn work to further compound the improvements in Atmosphere.

The linkages highlighted by the Cog Effect make clear the complex processes involved in community regeneration, which supports the idea that measuring the impacts of regeneration initiatives via single indicators, such as income poverty, is inadequate. The Atmosphere, Landscape and Horizon Framework not only provides a useful framework for measuring the subtle impacts of regeneration, but the thinking associated with the framework may also help enable regeneration practitioners to understand the many linkages and multiplier effects that occur alongside regeneration initiatives. These linkages and effects constantly change the outcomes of regeneration in a particular community, so it is important to try and understand them.

Applying the Approach

3

The ALH approach utilises both statistical (qualitative) data and information derived from a local community audit (qualitative data) to provide a comprehensive understanding of life in the community. We have selected a number of widely available statistical indicators following a review of international evidence for their effectiveness. The final selection has been determined by their availability at the right spatial level and the possibility of fairly regular updates. Under normal circumstances we would not advocate extensive use of data derived from the Census but if you are developing your base-line measures before 2015 it could be useful to include some Census data as this will allow comparison with future Census materials and the collection of the Census data will have been recent enough for it to be largely accurate and valid.

The qualitative data is derived more from direct opinion and values expressed by residents of the locality and those who work with them. Using surveys, focus groups and interviews you can derive detailed knowledge of key issues from the perspective of those who experience them. This approach is particularly valuable in the context of Results Based Accounting (RBA) which has been adopted by Welsh Government for its Communities First programme and is being used in the context of an increasing range of policy areas. RBA is concerned to identify the direct outcomes of policy as experienced by the beneficiaries it seeks to support. Accessing people's direct views is an essential means of understanding the impact of policies and programmes. RBA is too complex a subject to explain in depth here but you will find a Guide to Monitoring and Evaluation on the CREW website at www.regenwales.org. The development of community auditing approaches is addressed in detail in section 5.

4

Quantitative Data

Firstly, we will look at the statistical indicators
we have identified as a key element of the
ALH approach. These are grouped under
the relevant headings of the Atmosphere,
Landscape and Horizon framework.

LOSA LOOKUP

In order to find your community in the Stats Wales system you may need to know the
corresponding Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) name and code. All Welsh LSOA names
and codes along with a map of the corresponding area can be found via:

http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=17819

4.1 MEASURE OF ATMOSPHERE

	MEASURE	DATA SOURCE*	DATA AVAILABLE**
Accessibility	Access to key services and facilities at the neighbourhood level by foot and public transport - This indicator monitors fostering social inclusion through access via public transport, walking and cycling to core services and facilities. It is a key social inclusion and quality of life outcome. The indicator cuts across a number of service areas and can assist how they are planned and delivered.	LSOA - WAG data from the WIMD updated every three years available at http://www.infobasecymru.net/IAS/ - Themes - Transport - Reports - Local Area - Data also available at LSOA - Updated every three years by the WIMD - Available via http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/ - Enter Stats Wales – Social Inclusion – Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation – WIMD: Indicator Analysis – LSOAs: WIMD Indicator Analysis Community Audit	These indicators show access to the key services by bus and walking. Average travel time to: NHS dentist, food shop, GP surgery, leisure centre, library, post office, primary school, secondary school and transport nodes ALH Survey Questions 31,32 and 33
Community Cohesion	Qualitative data collection on community cohesion	This data would be obtained by performing a Community Audit	ALH Survey Questions 18 and 21
Active Community Participation	Qualitative data collection regarding active community participation	This data would be obtained by performing a Community Audit	ALH Survey Questions 22 and 23
Crime	Rate of crimes: (a) Violent Crime, (b) Burglary, (c) Theft, (d) Criminal Damage, (e) Youth Offenders and (f) Adult Offenders	Data also available at LSOA - Updated every three years by the WIMD - Available via http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/ - Enter Stats Wales – Social Inclusion – Welsh Index Rate of recorded violent crime Rate of recorded burglary Rate of recorded theft Rate of recorded criminal	Rate of recorded violent crime Rate of recorded burglary Rate of recorded theft Rate of recorded criminal damage. Number of youth offenders as a percentage of population Number of adult offenders as a percentage of population
Crime	All Local / Street Level crime and anti-social behaviour	www.police.uk - type in post code of required area - Click crime maps	Neighbourhood Level – monthly crime Burglary Anti-Social Behaviour Robbery Vehicle Crime Violent Crime Other Crime
Perceptions / Fear of Crime	Local data collection regarding perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour	This data would be obtained by performing a Community Audit	ALH Survey Questions 24 - 30
Employment	People of working age in employment	Available at http://www.infobasecymru.net/IAS/ - Themes - Economy - Reports (local area) -	LSOA - updated every decade via the census Note - the data used for this statistic comes from the census. As such this indicator should only be considered accurate for a maximum of 5 years following the census. This data cannot be used to show change over time for any period shorter than a decade. % of people aged 16-74, who are economically active - working full-time % of people aged 16-74, who are economically active - working part time % of people aged 16-74, who are economically active - self-employed % of people aged 16-74, who are economically active - unemployed

4.1 MEASURE OF ATMOSPHERE (CONT.)

	MEASURE	DATA SOURCE*	DATA AVAILABLE**
Employment / Workless / benefit Claimants	The percentage of the population of working age that is claiming key benefits. Key Benefits = JSA, Incapacity Benefits, Income Support This indicator can measure where concentrations of worklessness exist within each LAA and provides an indication of how severe those concentrations are in each place. An improvement in this indicator would demonstrate that polarisation of economic opportunity is reducing within the area.	Updated quarterly from DWP + ONS (Via NOMIS) at http://www.infobasecymru.net/IAS/ - type in postcode for area - data required under economy heading (LSOA data regarding the percentage of people claiming income or employment related benefits is also available via Data also available at LSOA - Updated every three years by the WIMD - Available via http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/ - Enter Stats Wales – Social Inclusion – Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation – WIMD: Indicator Analysis – LSOAs: WIMD Indicator Analysis) (LSOA Data regarding the ages of those claiming JSA and the Duration of their claim can be found at : http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/ - Summary Statistics ward – enter postcode / choose ward	LSOA - Number of working age people who are claimants % of working age claimants claiming Jobs Seekers Allowance % of working age claimants claiming incapacity benefits % of working age claimants claiming Disability Living Allowance
Satisfaction with local area	Qualitative data collection regarding residents' satisfaction with the local area.	This data would be obtained by performing a Community Audit	ALH Survey Questions 13, 14, 15, 16, 19 and 20
Sense of belonging to a neighbourhood	Qualitative data collection designed to assess whether residents feel that they belong to a community, and whether they can influence decisions in that community	This data would be obtained by performing a Community Audit	ALH Survey Questions 17 and 18

4.2 MEASURE OF LANDSCAPE

	MEASURE	DATA SOURCE*	DATA AVAILABLE**
Landscape	In order to accurately assess local area Landscape a physical local audit needs to be carried out. Details for this will be provided separately	This data would be obtained by performing the Placecheck component of the Community Audit	Community Audit
Local Environment Quality	Assessment of local environmental quality - % of sites rated as poor + unsatisfactory - A sample of sites are assessed in terms of litter, dog-fouling, detritus, weeds, fly-tipping, fly-posting, graffiti, physical appearance, condition and maintenance, etc.	This data would be obtained by performing the Placecheck element of Community Audit	Community Audit

	MEASURE	DATA SOURCE*	DATA AVAILABLE**
Physical Environment - Landscape	Area of parks and green spaces per 1,000 head of population The purpose of this indicator is to provide an indication of the extent of green spaces available to the public for recreational purposes.	This data would be obtained by performing the Placecheck element of Community Audit	Community Audit
Local Provision	NPFA / Fields Trust - Six Acre Standard - The standard suggests that for each 1000 residents there should be 2.4 hectares (6 acres) comprising of: 1.6 hectares (4 acres) for outdoor sport and recreation space (including parks) 0.8 hectares (2 acres) for children's play, with about 0.25 ha of this equipped playgrounds Does the local provision of playing fields and amenities meet the 6 acre standard minimums.	This data would be obtained by performing a Community Audit	Community Audit
Value of Housing / Proxy measure for Housing Quality	Council tax bands of Local Housing This can be used as a proxy measure for housing quality in a given area.	This data is annually updated - available at http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/ - more areas = output area - housing - Dwellings by council tax band. This data is annually updated - available at http://www.infobasecymru.net/IAS/ - local area report - type in relevant post code - information required can be found under the housing heading	Output area - Data Available - Dwelling Stock by Council Tax Band - numbers and as a percentage of total housing stock LSOA - Dwelling stock by council tax band and a comparison to the welsh average (Graph form)
RSL Data - In areas with high concentrations of social housing, the indicators below could be used to give a proxy for the Landscape of the neighbourhood.	Rejections of Accommodation Offers - The number of offers which have to be made per 100 properties let. - The reasons why accommodation offers are refused can provide an important source of information from customers about the state of demand for an area. Adverse Reasons for Leaving an Area - The proportion of tenants supplying 'adverse' reasons for leaving a community per 100 moves 'out'. - Where RSLs have effective exit interviewing processes that capture most of tenancies terminated in an area. The Housing Corporation's CORE data sets include a question on the reasons properties were vacated. Refusals to select a Community (Waiting List) - The proportion of potential tenants refusing to be put on a waiting list for accommodation in their own community because of its reputation. - It may give more 'early warning' information than offer rejections Surveys of Residents' Satisfaction - The percentage of residents considering the community has a good reputation.	This data would be held by local Registered Social Landlord (RSL). Below is an example of methods of data collection employed by RSLs. RSL and Combined Housing Registers CORE RSL Exit interviews. Local Authority movers surveys CORE RSL and Combined Housing Registers RSL surveys Local Authority surveys	RSL data

4.3 MEASURE OF HORIZON

	MEASURE	DATA SOURCE*	DATA AVAILABLE**
Education and Qualifications	Educational achievement and standards.	Data also available at LSOA - Updated every three years by the WIMD - Available via http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/ - Enter Stats Wales – Social Inclusion – Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation – WIMD: Indicator Analysis – LSOAs: WIMD Indicator Analysis	LSOA - Data available - Key stage 2 average point scores (educational attainment of pupils being taught in National Curriculum Year group 6, measured using teacher assessments Key stage 3 average point scores (educational attainment of pupils being taught in National Curriculum Year group 9, measured using teacher assessments) Key stage 4 average point scores (educational attainment of pupils aged 15 as at 31 August, measured by external examinations) Primary and Secondary School absence rate - (engagement with education) Percentage of people not entering higher education aged 18-19 Percentage of adults aged 25-59/64 with no qualifications
Education and Qualifications	Level of Educational Attainment per school. (This source provides data on the achievement at each individual school. If you are interested in educational attainment in your community, then you should only use data for schools which service your community)	Updated annually - http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk - schools and teachers - Examinations and assessments - School level reports -	Individual School Level - Primary - Key Stage 1 Percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or above: English Percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or above: Welsh (First Language) Percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or above: Mathematics Percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or above: Science Percentage of pupils achieving the Core Subject Indicator Key Stage 2 Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above: English Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above: Welsh (First Language) Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above: Mathematics Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above: Science Percentage of pupils achieving the Core Subject Indicator Secondary - Key Stage 3 Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above: English Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above: Welsh (First Language) Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above: Mathematics Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above: Science Percentage of pupils achieving the Core Subject Indicator Key Stage 4 Percentage of pupils achieving the level 2 threshold including English/Welsh and Mathematics Percentage of pupils achieving the level 2 threshold Percentage of pupils achieving the level 1 threshold Percentage of pupils achieving the level 2 qualification in each of the core subjects (CSI) Key Stage 5 Percentage of pupils entering 2 or more 'A' levels or equivalent and achieving the level 3 threshold

	MEASURE	DATA SOURCE*	DATA AVAILABLE**
Participation in lifelong learning	Qualitative data collection regarding participation in lifelong learning	This data would be obtained by performing a Community Audit	ALH Survey Questions 47 -51
Engagement with education / culture and attitude of young people	Primary / Secondary school persistent absence rate	Available via -http://www.infobasecymru.net/IAS/ - type in postcode for area for a summary report - required information will be under the education heading Also available at: LSOA - Updated every three years by the WIMD - Available via http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/ - Enter Stats Wales – Social Inclusion – Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation – WIMD: Indicator Analysis – LSOAs: WIMD Indicator Analysis)	LSOA - updated every three years from WIMD % of pupil absence in primary schools % of pupil absence in secondary schools
Poverty / Child Poverty	The percentage of children receiving free school meals in a community. Claiming free school meals is used as an indicator that highlights poverty amongst families.	available at http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk - Schools and teachers / School census (for required output level / free school meals	Local Authority Level - Assembly Constituency Level - School Level - Data from the Welsh assembly governments annual school census - (Note on School level data - this data can be useful when constructing community boundaries that relate to residents perceptions. However care must be taken to properly understand how many children from each community actually attend which school, as it is not uncommon for children not to attend their closest school especially at secondary level) Data available - Number of children eligible, % of children eligible, 5 - 15 year olds eligible and this as a percentage
Caring responsibilities - a factor restricting opportunities	Proportion of people in the working age (16-65) caring for ill, disabled or elderly in the home.	Available at Nomisweb.co.uk - Summary statistics - Ward.	Ward - updated every quarter (DWP data) via NOMIS DWP benefit claimant data for those claiming benefits relating to caring for others. The percentage figures show the number of benefit claimants as a proportion of resident population aged 16-64.
Life Limiting Illness	Percentage who report a long-standing health problem or disability that substantially limits their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities Cancer Incidence rate. This indicator can help to show where there are concentrations of residents whose participation in labour market may be impaired.	LSOA - Updated every three years by the WIMD - Available via http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/ - Enter Stats Wales – Social Inclusion – Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation – WIMD: Indicator Analysis – LSOAs: WIMD Indicator Analysis)	LSOA - Updated every three years by the WIMD. Note - the data used for this statistic comes from the census. As such this indicator should only be considered accurate for a maximum of 5 years following the census. This data cannot be used to show change over time for any period shorter than a decade. Data Available - Limiting Long Term Illness (any long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits a person's activities or the work they can do) (rate per 100,000 people)
Self-Reported General Health	Qualitative data collection regarding self-reported general health	This data would be obtained by performing a Community Audit	ALH Survey Questions 40 -46

* CREW is not responsible for the content of the source locations. All links are correct at the time of the publication of this toolkit, but may change in the future. If you come across any broken or outdated links please contact CREW, and we will update the toolkit. **A brief tutorial on how to use the Stats Wales resource is available in the resource section of this toolkit.

Understanding the weighting of problems can assist in prioritising interventions and allocating scarce resources.

4.4 QUANTITATIVE DATA ROUNDUP

When collated and integrated in your final report these indicators will provide a detailed picture of life in your local community and the relative importance of key issues. For example it may enable you to see that as well as poverty deriving from worklessness there are also critical health problems that need addressing. Understanding the weighting of problems can assist in prioritising interventions and allocating scarce resources. Most critically, the first time you do this exercise it provides you with a base-line measure for understanding future changes and whether your policies are having beneficial effect.

However, the detailed picture of the community you will have created by this exercise is not complete. There are many local factors that are not represented by statistical sources and it is essential to engage directly with local residents to discover their perspectives and understanding of the ley issues affecting where they live. In the following section we describe the community auditing methodology that will allow you do achieve this.

5

Qualitative Data: The Community Audit

As can be seen from the Indicators matrix in many instances there are no locally available statistical sources to provide us with the detailed knowledge we need or information about any changes over time that might be occurring. In the absence of available data we have to be innovative to identify local sources of information which might be available but also to 'create' data first-hand by doing our own direct research. There are many methodologies which can be implemented to develop local knowledge and provide information which is not available in the wider sets of official statistics. The following sections identify the core methods we would employ to fully define the Atmosphere, Landscape and Horizon of a specific community.

5.1. A VISUAL REVIEW

One of the best places to start is to conduct a simple tour of the community or locality you are reviewing. The act of walking around a community and checking its condition visually is very informative and will tell you lots about the Atmosphere and Landscape features identified in this toolkit. A community reveals much of its identity in its buildings, the housing quality, the quality of the street scene and the availability of social and community facilities. Engaging in conversation with local residents during this process can also give you a good thumbnail sketch of what the key issues might be for them and their families. This exercise can be quite informal and you can also do it as a team exercise with all those who might be involved in the community. There are some clear methods developed nationally to make sure you get the best results from this process. The walk around a community can become a major source of information if done in collaboration with local residents and key service providers. We are very keen on one particular approach called Place Check. This is a well tried and tested method of community engagement and an excellent first stage activity to understand about the Atmosphere, Landscape and Horizon characteristics of the community. You can find all the information you need to complete a Place Check at http://www.placecheck.info/

WHEN SHOULD I USE A PLACECHECK APPROACH?

This is best completed at the start of the project when it can give you a clear sense of the key issues in a given community. If you involve local people in a full Place Check process you will also gain a strong local perspective based on the experience of residents of the community.

HOW DO I DELIVER A PLACE CHECK?

We suggest you follow the established methodology of Place Checking detailed on the Placecheck website (www.placecheck.info/). There are also case studies there that you can follow and which can inspire your local approach. If you search online you will also find many examples of how Placecheck has been applied internationally.

ADVANTAGES

- Placecheck is a straightforward methodology which is very easy to deliver
- It is very cost effective and requires very little resource
- It is a very effective means of community engagement in your overall programme
- It very successfully captures community viewpoints
- It is very inclusive and can include all key stakeholders in a locality

DISADVANTAGES

There are no major disadvantages with the Placecheck approach. However, if conducted with local residents you should be clear that this is the initial stage of a longer process and you should take care not to raise aspirations too high about the extent of change that might be possible.(www.placecheck.info/). There are also case studies there that you can follow and which can inspire your local approach.

5.2 THE SURVEY

Surveys are very useful instruments for the collection of large amounts of information from potentially large numbers of people. Surveys use a questionnaire and have the major advantage of collecting the same information from different types of people. This allows us to gain a general overview but also allows us to understand how different groups might have different opinions about the same issues in their communities. For young people the skate-board park might make a vital contribution to their social and community life. For elderly people the same resource might be seen as threatening and a potential source of anti-social behaviour. A well conducted survey will allow us to both identify and quantify these differences of opinion.

Surveys should be employed only when a clear advantage can be seen from their use. It is very easy for populations to develop 'research fatigue' if their views are constantly sought in surveys. This is especially true if they do not see any follow up to the survey either in terms of receiving a report about the results or more importantly, actual changes in their community.

Before committing an organisation to the expense of a survey you should ask the following questions:

- When was a survey last implemented in this community
- What information did it acquire
- Is that information still relevant
- Would a new survey provide new information
- Are there other sources which could provide the data you require

Weighing up your answers should provide you with a clear decision about the need to conduct a survey

If you decide to proceed, the next stage is to design your questionnaire. Questionnaire design is a complex and skilled area. There are key techniques to ensure that the data achieved is reliable and verifiable and that residents are not led in their answers by the shape and nature of the questions. Because of the skills required many community questionnaires are poorly designed and cannot be relied upon. To solve this issue in this Toolkit you will find a questionnaire that had been developed and implemented in over 30 community studies. It was initially developed at the Programme for Community Regeneration based at the University of Glamorgan and was primarily intended for use in the initial Communities First audits required in 2002-4. Since then it has been refined and improved in over 30 Community Audits and you can have a high level of confidence in its relevance and applicability to the collection of data at the community level.

The Core Questionnaire provided is sufficient to conduct a comprehensive community survey and to provide all the data required for the ALH Framework. However, sometimes there are specific issues in communities that require particular attention and you may wish to add questions to provide data and evidence on those issues. There is no problem with you doing this; however, you should pay particular attention to the careful design of the questions you add.

- In general try to follow the form and pattern of the main questionnaire. Suddenly, coming to a question that is very different from the rest of the questionnaire can throw someone completing it and even be a reason for them not finishing the questionnaire.

- Do not limit the answers people are able to give by shaping the question in one direction. For example ask which category best describes your neighbourhood (Excellent, Good, Fair, Not Very Good Poor), rather than ask 'do you live in good neighbourhood'.

- Do not ask leading questions like 'do you agree that it is desirable to improve employment prospects'. Only one answer is really possible in such cases as everyone would want to be seen to supporting something positive.

- Do not add too many extra questions. Long questionnaires are the main reason why people do not complete them

- Avoid complicated language or complicated choices. The golden rule is Keep It Simple.

HOW DO I DELIVER A QUESTIONNAIRE?

It is possible to deliver surveys in two different ways. These are:

- Self- completion
- Interviewer-led

In general interviewer-led questionnaires provide the best approach as the interviewer can help clarify questions and support the respondent to complete the whole questionnaire. Inevitably, it can lead to some influence by the interviewer but good initial training on how to avoid this can minimise the problem. If you intend to use self-completion it is important that the questionnaire is designed for this method. It is important to avoid complicated questions and branch points in the questionnaire. Branches are where different responses lead the person completing the questionnaire (the respondent) to different parts of the questionnaire depending on their answer. For example an instruction such as; 'if your answer is no go to question 17 if it is yes go to question 28'. These are fine if an interviewer is leading the process but very difficult to ensure that it is done correctly by someone who is self-completing.

HOW DO I DISTRIBUTE THE QUESTIONNAIRE?

There are multiple of ways in which you can get your questionnaire to the audience (respondents) you are targeting.

POSTAL DELIVERY This can be in the general mail or hand-delivered to houses in your target area. Postal surveys can work well but return rates can be quite low, especially if respondents have to go to the Post Office to post it back in the general mail. You can improve return rates by placing local collection boxes in key sites such as libraries, surgeries, local shops, community centres and pubs or clubs. You can also provide incentives, for example, by entering respondents in a prize draw. However, this does mean they have to sacrifice their anonymity, which may discourage some respondents.

INTERVIEWER DELIVERED Here the interviewer calls at the house and usually completes the questionnaire on the doorstep. Sometimes, if completion at that time is not convenient, arrangements are made to call back at the respondent's preferred time. The advantage of this method is that it is easier to get higher completion rates, especially if you have the resources to do repeat calls until you have a response. However, this does take a lot of hours and is dependent on you having sufficient people to do this. Using volunteers from the community can help enormously with this method there are several advantages.

- You can recruit a large team of interviewers who will be keen to contribute and add to your resources.

- Local residents may trust them more than strangers who they may see as 'officials'.

- Participation by local residents is participative and empowering and can be part of the positive change process you are trying to promote.

QUESTIONNAIRE DEPOSIT AND COLLECTION POINTS

It is possible to target specific populations at key community locations such as the Housing Office, the GP Surgery or the Post Office. There questionnaires can be picked up and self-completed by general members of the public and returned to collection boxes at the place they found the questionnaire. This can be useful to improve sampling but there are some small risks of multiple completions by individuals or organised groups. You should avoid this approach if there are any contentious issues involved in your survey.

STREET-BASED INTERVIEWS

Perhaps most of us have the experience of being stopped in the street to complete a questionnaire. This can be a useful way of targeting particular age and gender groups as the interviewer can be certain to stop respondents who fit their requirements. This is often referred to as 'quota sampling' where you decide in advance how many respondents you would like in particular categories. Street interviews can also be very useful in gaining responses from young people who do not engage with the usual youth services. If you are intending to do this at the local level it is important to tell the police that your will be interviewing young people and you should only use team members with appropriate CRB clearance. Team members should also only work in pairs.

ON-LINE AND SOCIAL-MEDIA DELIVERY

In recent years it has been possible to deliver your survey by an increasing range of 'virtual' methods. You can develop your questionnaire on a host web-site and then email links to your target community. The most established website is Survey Monkey (see panel). The clear advantages of this method are its economy of resources and the on-line analysis tools that the method provides. This can quickly provide you with analysis of your survey results. The key challenge is being able to connect to people and let them know about your survey and persuade them to complete it online. Use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter has proved very successful in achieving this and can be an important supplement to email and more conventional methods such as newsletters, flyers and notices. It is particularly useful in reaching younger people who tend to take such approaches for granted. However, the central concern with this delivery method is its potential to exclude significant numbers of people who have no access to the internet or social media. This would be especially true for older populations and for those experiencing poverty. Consequently, we would see the use of internet delivered surveys as an important supplementary level designed to reach specific groups of people. It should not be used as the sole delivery method.

SURVEY MONKEY

Survey Monkey is an easy-to-use online tool for the creation of surveys. The simple online interface enables people of all experience levels to create their own surveys quickly and easily online. Being web-based, Survey Monkey also helps get people to your surveys, improving your distribution and response rates. You can also create email lists with custom invitations, to ensure your survey reaches critical persons in your community. After responses are received, the programme is able to collate responses, allowing you to easily interrogate and manipulate the data to find key issues, themes and trends. Finally, Survey Monkey offers a free limited account that stores 100 responses, and also a competitively priced professional account for larger projects. It's worth giving the free account a try to see if it's a tool that could make your community audit more effective and efficient.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Working in communities requires common sense and awareness of personal risk. You should follow all Health and Safety requirements of any organisation you work for. If you are recruiting community volunteers you should also ensure that they are trained in and conform to the Health and Safety practices of your organisation. If you are a volunteer in a community project without clear policies we would advice you to develop a set of procedures and be guided by the advice of the Suzy Lamplugh Trust (www.suzylamplugh.org/), which has developed safety guidelines for a wide range of working situations. Basic common sense principles include:

- Always work in pairs with regular agreed contact times established
- Avoid entering homes to complete the questionnaire unless absolutely necessary (e.g. to interview an older person) Ensure your partner is alerted if you do
- Avoid entering gardens with dogs unless you can establish it is not a danger to you.
- If you are working after dark use appropriate high visibility protective clothing

HOW DO I COLLATE THE INFORMATION?

Surveys can generate huge amounts of data with several hundred people responding to multiple questions. It is necessary to enter this data into computer software to help you organise and 'question' the data. The first stage is to identify a suitable programme. There are very sophisticated programmes used by professional researchers that allow very complicated statistical analysis. The most frequently used is SPSS but this is very expensive to buy and usually operated by Universities and professional consultancies. Most organisations have access to Microsoft Office. The spreadsheet programme Excel can be used providing the statistical package add-on has been installed. This can be done at any point providing you have access to the original discs. Information is entered as a numerical value e.g. In Yes/No answers; the yes would be given the value of 1 and a no answer the value of two. This is referred to as coding. This process is too detailed to convey here and it may be necessary for you to take advice on how you create a spreadsheet and code your data.

You can analyse the data manually but it would be very time-consuming and prone to mistakes. It would also be difficult to move beyond simple averages and numerical data (e.g. average age or percentage of respondents supporting a proposal) into determining the connection between someone's age and their liking the proposal.

You can see the box-out on page 27 for more information on relevant software.

SUMMARY: THE SURVEY

WHEN SHOULD I USE IT?
- When you want a broad understanding of opinions and attitudes throughout the community.
- When you want to tap opinion about a wide range of issues
- When you are establishing a baseline of people's perception of their community
- When you are revisiting that opinion at a later date to check for change.

ADVANTAGES
- Traps a wide range of opinions
- Can be done quickly
- Provides clear numerical data about key issues
- Involves the community directly

DISADVANTAGES
- Can be expensive to deliver
- Requires significant staff or volunteer resources for a short sharp exercise.
- A level of technical skill is required to use the data effectively

CASE STUDY ONE In the New Deal for Communities Programme, which ran in England for 10 years from 2000 to 2010, the programme started with a MORI poll of 1,000 in each neighbourhood. This was repeated at two-year intervals to develop an understanding of changing perceptions throughout the course of the programme. The final survey at the 10-year point was an important part of the overall evaluation. In addition the same survey was employed in areas where there was no intervention to provide comparisons with change in the target communities. Overall the programme was seen to have positively changed the communities for the better in the majority of indicator. The same change did not occur in the 'comparator' communities

CASE STUDY TWO The Communities First Audit Maerdy, South Wales. In this Community Audit the Survey component was administered door-to-door with an interviewer-led approach. The University of Glamorgan Team worked alongside community volunteers who were trained in survey techniques. This enabled the survey to be completed quickly and efficiently and with the trust of the community who could see local people involved. The return rate was improved and through their participation in the questionnaire design, local residents were able to identify local priorities and influence the structure and content of the questionnaire.

5.3 FOCUS GROUPS

In contrast to the large-scale data collection associated with a survey it is also important to drill down into pubic opinion to establish some of the detail of community perceptions about key issues. There are several ways in which that can be achieved. The most common method used is the focus group. This is usually defined as a group interview or group conversation in which the interviewer follows a schedule of questions or topics for discussion with a small group of people, typically between and 8 and 12 in number. The ideal focus group is a guided conversation in which the interviewer leads the discussion without dominating it. The whole objective is to encourage participants to talk openly and freely about their views. It is a highly participative method in which the participants should effectively determine much of what is discussed and the priorities for debate but with the interviewer providing guidance and ensuring that the contributions are relevant and continue to address the subject of the focus group.

Interviewers can be trained to do this very quickly and easily and using local people to run the focus group can have many advantages in developing the early trust needed to make them successful. Participants should feel comfortable to contribute without judgmental attitudes being expressed by either the interviewer or other participants. Clear rules to ensure this are established by collective agreement at the start of the exercise and the interviewer should ensure that all participants follow the basic rules. These usually include:

- **NO SWEARING** This is sometimes difficult to achieve but is an important symbol of taking the exercise seriously and engaging with it with respect for the other participants.

- **ONE PERSON TALKS AT A TIME THROUGH THE INTERVIEWER** This is important to prevent multiple conversations taking place which the interviewer will be unable to keep track of. Even if a tape or digital recorder is used it can be difficult to distinguish on playback between multiple conversations. You can achieve this by having a marker that is passed around to the person who wants to speak. Only the person with the marker is allowed to speak. Markers can be any item relevant to the group, e.g. a football or an amusing hat.

- **NO SHOUTING, ARGUING OR THREATENING BEHAVIOUR** This is essential to promote equality of viewpoints and to ensure that participants feel safe and comfortable and able to participate without unpleasant challenge from their peers in the group.

It is often useful to have the main interviewer supported by a note-taker so that they can concentrate on the discussion and lead it effectively. It will also assist the application of the basic rules if the interviewer can concentrate on the dynamics of the group

The ideal focus group is a guided conversation in which the interviewer leads the discussion without dominating it.

HOW LONG SHOULD A FOCUS GROUP LAST?

Most focus groups last approximately one to one and a half hours. It is difficult to determine in advance, as this will vary according to the subject and the level of interest of the participants. You should allow about ten minutes for the group to gel. Some interviewers use 'ice-breakers' to relax participants and make them comfortable in the group. Our experience is that these need a skilled interviewer and can make some people feel uncomfortable and, in some cases, quite silly if the ice-breaker involves role-play or self-disclosure of some kind. It is usually better to begin with a simple question that everyone will have an opinion of and feel able to answer. You can then work towards more difficult subjects as the group comes together. For example, in many of the contexts you will apply the Toolkit you could begin with a simple' what is it like to live here'.

SHOULD I RECORD A FOCUS GROUP?

With the agreement of the group tape recorders or digital recorders can be used but these are often difficult to transcribe from a noisy room with lots of background interference, for example from air conditioning and are best not relied upon. However, where a group is willing for their use recordings can provide useful back up for supporting written notes. On more sensitive issues it is unwise to introduce recording equipment to the session as it may inhibit responses or in some case lead to exaggeration. For example a group of older people might minimise their disclosure of how much alcohol they drink while a group of young people may exaggerate their drinking to impress peers in the group.

To supplement the formal notes taken it is also useful for the interviewer to write down their memories of the conversation at the earliest possible time after the completion of the focus group. This provides a secondary source of information to support and cross-reference with the main notes. If two people are deployed it is also useful for them to hold a de-briefing meeting where they compare their views and agree the broad patterns of opinion that have been expressed throughout the group. For example, one forceful individual constantly restating an opinion can create a greater sense of importance for an issue than the group as a whole might have identified. Agreeing the weighting of opinions expressed should lead to a more balanced interpretation of the importance of issues.

HOW MANY FOCUS GROUPS SHOULD I DO?

This in part depends on the size of the community and your resources. Focus groups often follow from a community survey which has provided a broad brush view of the key issues. The focus group is then designed to find out more about these key issues. For a community consisting of perhaps 400 households it would be sufficient to aim for approximately 3- 6 focus group. For larger communities similar proportions would apply

HOW DO I SAMPLE THE WIDER POPULATION IN MY FOCUS GROUPS?

Usually it is best to segment the population, perhaps by age or gender and convene specific groups. People are usually more comfortable with people like themselves and for young people especially it can be intimidating to interview them with older residents. We would advise having groups arranged by age ranges of about 5-10years. For some key topics it can be useful to separate by gender to establish if, for example, men have a different view of the community from women. However, it can also be useful to hold at least one mixed group as the resulting discussion can illustrate why their views are different.

HOW DO I COLLATE THE INFORMATION?

The first stage of using the data you have collected is to arrange it as text. This might involve typing up hand-written notes or transcribing from a recording of the focus group. The next stage is to identify key themes and collect the material in relation to single themes together.

This can be achieved by highlighting common issues with colour coded highlighter pens so that you document becomes zoned by colour in relation to specific topics. You can use the 'find' facilities of a word processor to find specific key words and then cut and paste common points into a single section of the document to provide easier analysis. Finally there are software packages that can link multiple documents according to key themes and organise and cross reference the material accordingly, which you can see in the box-out on the following page.

NVIVO & OTHER SOFTWARE

NVivo is a software package designed to assist in the analysis of qualitative data. The package can enable a researcher to rapidly and accurately analyse research items such as questionnaires, transcripts of interviews and focus groups and other literature. NVivo 9 can also help analyse digital photographs and audio and video recordings. NVivo is intended to help users organize and analyse non-numerical or unstructured data. The software allows users to classify, sort and arrange information; examine relationships in the data; and combine analysis with linking, shaping, searching and modelling. A researcher is able to test theories, identify trends and cross-examine information in a multitude of ways using its search engine and query functions. They can make observations in the software and build a body of evidence to support their case or project. Other similar programmes are QDA Miner, XSight, dedoose and Knowdoo.

FOCUS GROUP: WHEN SHOULD I USE IT?

- When you want to have a more detailed understanding of respondents attitudes and values.

- When you want to explore in greater depth the social experience of living in the community

- When you want to understand more fully the residents' experience of living there

- When you want to target specific social groups and compare their views with others

ADVANTAGES

- Focus groups provide an opportunity to develop detailed understanding of views and why they are held. A questionnaire often provides only simple categories of answers.

- In a focus group we can ask participants to explain and elaborate their views and any qualifications they might want to express.

- Focus groups are less resource intensive and can be achieved with a small team in relatively short timescales

- They are useful for comparing changing community views.

DISADVANTAGES

- Establishing focus groups can be difficult and many researchers attempt to visit pre-existing groups (e.g. older person's groups or mother and baby groups) at their usual time and place. This provides easy access and provides a group environment where people are known to each other and generally comfortable in each other's presence.

- Working with socially excluded populations can sometimes lead to groups who are very difficult to engage in discussion as they may lack confidence to speak 'publically' or to express personal experiences and viewpoints. In general this is not a major problem and the skill of the interviewer is to put everyone at ease and encourage participation.

- Occasionally, groups can be dominated by a forceful individual or small group and again the interviewer has to find a way of allowing them to express an opinion without denying other the same opportunity. This requires some personal skills and occasionally quite clear statements that you would like to hear from someone who hasn't had chance to speak yet. Very few people do not respond to the normal social cues that they have spoken too much and it is someone else's turn.

5.4 CRITICAL PERSON INTERVIEWS

There is a considerable body of information available from those who live and work in a community. People who have a lengthy experience of a community can develop a very clear perspective of change over time and of the depth and scale of current issues. Such people are usually term 'critical persons' and can provide a unique viewpoint.

WHO SHOULD I INTERVIEW?

Usually we would select from the range of people who operate professionally in the community. This can include midwives, health visitors, police personnel, teachers in local schools and local councillors. You can also interview key people in local organisations including faith groups, mother and baby groups, older persons associations and voluntary organisations generally who operate in the community. Exactly who you interview is a matter of resources and of the specific information you are looking for.

HOW MANY INTERVIEWS SHOULD I DO?

These interviews are best seen as a supplement for the key methods of survey and focus groups. Consequently, it is not necessary to complete large numbers of interviews. Selection of relevant contacts who are available and willing to participate is key rather than simply accumulating a large number of interviews. Typically 6-10 interviews would be more than sufficient.

SHOULD I RECORD AN INTERVIEW?

It is very useful to record an interview if at all possible as it enable accurate transcription of the interview content and you are able to go back to check your understanding of key points. However, it should only be done with the clear consent of the interviewee.

HOW DO I INTERVIEW SOMEONE?

It can be daunting to both interview someone and to be interviewed so everything should be done to make it relaxed and informal. You should prepare a list of questions you wish to ask but also be prepared to discuss things that are important to the interviewee. This kind of interview is usually referred to as an unstructured or open interview in comparison to the interview you might do to complete a questionnaire which is very structured. Choosing the right place to conduct an interview is key to its success and people are generally most at ease in their own homes or community buildings that they are very familiar with. Subject to the health and safety guidance in this document you should be prepared to meet interviewees at their preferred location and time. A simple check list of things to do includes:

- Introduce yourself and explain the background of the interview.
- Offer an opportunity to decline the interview at this point.
- Ask the interviewee to introduce themselves and outline their role and experience in the community
- Begin with straightforward questions which put the interviewee at ease and do not challenge them
- Build to more difficult issues as the interview progresses
- Do not be impatient if answers are vague or not useful for your purposes. Rephrase and ask the same question from a slightly different angle or return to the subject later in the interview.
- Conclude by offering thanks and an opportunity for the interviewee to identify any final issues that they feel you have not addressed.

HOW DO I COLLATE THE INFORMATION?

Using the data from interviews is very similar to the way you work with your focus group reports. It is best to transcribe the interviews so that you have a text version of them. The next stage is to identify key themes and collect the material in relation to single themes together.

This can be achieved by highlighting common issues with colour coded highlighter pens so that you document becomes zoned by colour in relation to specific topics. You can use the 'find' facilities of a word processor to find specific key words and then cut and paste common points into a single section of the document to provide easier analysis. Finally there are software packages that can link multiple documents according to key themes and organise and cross reference the material accordingly (See Box on Software in the Focus Group section).

CRITICAL PERSONS INTERVIEWS: WHEN SHOULD I USE THEM?

These should be used as a supplementary method to support any survey and focus group work you have done. You should use them to capture well-grounded local and professional opinion about the community you are reviewing. You can engage other agencies in your work in this way and they may have other information that they can make available to you.

ADVANTAGES
- Critical persons interviews allow you to capture local experience and contextualise data derived from surveys

- They can provide considerable insight into the community from the professional perspectives of health, housing, education, policing etc.

- They can tap lengthy community experience by capturing the views of long-term residents

- They can draw on the experience of local political representatives

DISADVANTAGES
- Critical Persons Interviews can be time-consuming to arrange with busy practitioners

- Some practitioners may feel a professional conflict with disclosing information so discussions must be kept at a whole population level and not challenge their client confidentiality obligations.

- Some practitioners develop negative stereotypes of the communities they work with as they are often dealing with crisis management. This can distort their perception of the wider community population.

Using the data from interviews is very similar to the way you work with your focus group reports.

Report Summary

6

Following the guidance in this document will provide you with a clear understanding of the current conditions in any community that you are concerned with. Effective understanding of the impact of programmes and policies is essential in the current economic climate when achieving results is a critical requirement. Developing clear base-line measures and checking progress over time is a key task of any monitoring and evaluation system but is even more important in the context of Results Based Accounting which is increasingly applied in the public and third sectors. The ALH Framework provides a clear methodology and conceptual framework for understanding the lives of residents of our communities and their 'lived experience of poverty'. The Toolkit provides a flexible approach which can accommodate the specific needs of communities and the organisations that work with them.

If you require any clarification or elaboration of any of the methods discussed in this toolkit please get in touch with CREW at enquiries@regenwales.org

crew

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