

Shaping Places for Wellbeing

Project Town Structures and Support Mechanisms Workstream Summary Report



As a Programme we identified 6 areas of the Programme journey where we felt evaluation could help national replication. We identified these areas as workstreams, and a Project Lead picked up and led each of these pieces of work.

Context of Workstream

Across the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme there were seven project towns. These towns were all identified for inclusion in the programme based on levels of deprivation, as identified through the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). It was recognised that each of the towns had intermediate zones and/or data zones, that were classified as the most deprived in Scotland, and as such they had communities that were currently living with inequalities. With the programme focused on improving the Places within these towns to positively impact on inequalities, the similarity in terms of SIMD classification was essential.

Beyond the similarities of SIMD classification, the aims and objectives of the programme provided clarity and direction for the work in all Project Towns, with consistency across core activities to be undertaken, targeted outcomes and reporting within all seven towns. Despite this consistency in the core Project Town work, there were differences in the structures and support mechanisms for each town, including:

- Which organisation employs the positions of Project Lead and Community Link Lead
- Where the Project Lead and Community Link Lead are based (access to facilities)
- The composition/membership of the Project Town Steering Groups
- The Chair for the Project Town Steering Group (and which organisation they are associated with)
- How and when the Project Town Steering Group was developed
- The Project Town journey into the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme and start date ('Switch On')



This workstream was set up to:-

- Explore these differences.
- Identify if they have had an impact on the project work in specific towns or the programme more broadly.
- Identify any learning to be shared in case of replication.

There were two strands to this workstream to explore the structures and support within the Project Towns:

- Shaping Places for Wellbeing project teams' structure and support arrangements
- Project Towns Steering Group structure and support arrangements.

Objectives of the Workstream

1. Capture clear outlines of the advantages/challenges to the different employment structures currently experienced within the team.
2. Outline the similarities and differences in the support structures of the steering groups, and the influence these differences have on project town work.
3. Develop recommendations for the support structures for steering groups to optimise the project town work.

Workstream Process

To achieve the workstream objectives, activities were undertaken by members of the Shaping Places for Wellbeing team, including:

- One-to-one interviews with Project Leads, Community Link Leads and Programme Officers
- Desk-based review of the Steering Group composition for each Project Town
- Anonymous interactive online sessions with Project Leads, Community Link Leads and Steering Group



Workstream Findings

Project Team Employment Structures

Interviews were conducted with eleven members of the overall programme team, including 3 x Project Leads, 2 x Programme Officers and 6 x Community Link Leads. Prior to the interview all interviewees were provided with a set of questions that would be explored to help prompt discussion.

Questions for Project Leads, Community Link Leads and Programme Officers

1. Do you feel that being employed directly by the Improvement Service/ Local Authority influences your ability to undertake the role you are employed to do?
2. Do you feel that being employed directly by the Improvement Service/ Local Authority impacts on your working relationships with the rest of the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme Team (including project leads, community link leads and programme team)?
3. Do you feel that being employed directly by the Improvement Service/ Local Authority influences your relationship with your steering group members?
4. Do you feel that being employed directly by the Improvement Service/ Local Authority has influenced your wider engagement and relationship building with stakeholders, community groups or other colleagues?
5. What do you feel are the main advantages of being employed directly by the Improvement Service/ Local Authority compared to the being employed by the Local Authority/Improvement Service?
6. What do you feel are the main challenges of being employed directly by the Improvement Service/ Local Authority compared to the being employed by the Local Authority/Improvement Service?
7. For future development of the programme, where would you recommend your role sit within the Improvement Service, Local Authority, Public Health Scotland, or another organisation?

Additional Question for Programme Officers

8. Are there differences in the support required for colleagues, associated with which organisation they are employed by (Improvement service or Local Authority)?

Summary of Workstream Findings and Recommendations

This findings from this workstream, relating to the structure and support mechanisms of the Shaping Places for Wellbeing programme, highlight key learnings that can be used to help guide others looking to adopt or replicate similar initiatives. The main themes identified are:

Relationships and Connections

Team Dynamics: The employment structure of project teams presents both advantages and challenges that influence the work being done. However, the individual skills of team members, such as communication, networking, professionalism, and relationship-building, are more crucial to the project's success.

Connection-Building: Success in the roles of Project Lead and Community Link Lead hinges on the ability to forge and maintain connections with individuals, teams, and organisations. Effective communication that builds confidence and trust is essential.

Leveraging Networks: Utilising existing platforms and networks is critical for developing new relationships. Support from steering group members to facilitate connections and identify opportunities is highly valuable.

Peer Support: Internal relationships within and between project town teams significantly impact the support experience. Sharing learning and ideas, a sense of team identity, and peer support are critical. Common challenges include the need for more frequent and in-person connections, underscoring the value of peer networks.

Engaged and Dynamic Steering Group

Representation and Flexibility: Steering groups play a significant role in the project's success. Key agencies' representation in these groups is crucial, though these key players can differ between towns. Steering group membership should remain flexible to include relevant organisations as identified by ongoing data profiling.



Purpose and Clarity: Clear understanding of the steering group's purpose and members' roles is essential. Disengagement often arises when group members lack clarity about the group's goals, their expected contributions, or when the project's relevance doesn't align with their priorities or core business.

Recommendations

Following the completion of this workstream, the following recommendations have been identified to help guide others wishing to adopt or replicate the work of the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme:

Focus on Skill Development:

- Prioritise hiring and training individuals with strong communication, networking, and relationship-building skills for key roles like Project Lead and Community Link Lead.
- Encourage ongoing professional development in these areas to ensure project teams can effectively navigate and leverage relationships and connections.

Strengthen Peer Support Networks:

- Facilitate regular, structured opportunities for project teams to connect and share experiences, both digitally and in person. Include opportunities for shared learning and reflection, with clear value placed on both aspects.
- Develop a robust support system within the programme that fosters a sense of community and shared purpose among team members. Additionally, ensure you actively remove any unnecessary barriers to creating a supportive sense of community, by adopting tools and platforms that allow for easy communication and sharing of information.

Optimise Steering Group Engagement:

- Clearly define the purpose of Steering Groups and the roles of individual members to prevent disengagement and misalignment of priorities. This can be achieved through mechanisms such as an agreed and defined Terms of Reference.
- Include timelines outlining review periods for the Steering Group, to encourage the group to regularly assess and adjust Steering Group membership, to ensure relevant agencies are represented.

- Foster active involvement of steering group members by aligning project goals with their core business and highlighting tangible links to their priorities.

Leverage Existing Networks and Relationships:

- Actively use existing relationships and platforms to facilitate new connections and support project goals.
- Encourage Steering Group members to use their networks to open doors and identify new opportunities, strengthening the project's reach and impact.

These recommendations aim to enhance the overall effectiveness of project teams and Steering Groups within the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme, ensuring sustainable and impactful outcomes.

For more information about the Shaping Places for Wellbeing place-based approach, please contact Irene Beautyman, Place and Wellbeing Partnership Lead, below. Alternatively, follow us on [LinkedIn - Planning and Place-Based Approaches](#), to keep up to date with the Planning and Place-Based Programmes from within the Improvement Service, and X [@place4wellbeing](#) to recap on the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme's journey.



