

## Resilient Communities - scoping paper

**The issue** - to better understand how the Covid pandemic has impacted on the health and well-being of different communities across Gateshead. How have those communities responded and what have we learnt from those responses that will help us build more resilient, healthy communities as we move towards a post-pandemic future. In particular, what were the responses that worked best for people and what can those who design and deliver services (both public and voluntary) learn in terms of how they can best support communities going forward.

**Pros and cons of us undertaking this work.**

**Pros-**

- Healthwatch will have improved access to, and better understanding of the needs of people and communities engaged with.
- Those people and communities will have a voice.
- Health & Social care providers and decision makers will also have better understanding of the needs of people and communities engaged with.

**Cons:**

- If the timings are wrong, we may struggle to engage with people and communities, due to continuing Covid restrictions.
- People may be suffering from consultation fatigue and decline to engage.
- There are many different communities across Gateshead, that can be defined by geography, ethnicity, religion, language, class, ability/disability and age, all of which are equally valid areas to focus on. However, we have limited capacity and whilst we can try to get a good 'spread', we will inevitably miss some communities, who may have significant insights to share.

**What we are seeking to achieve** (goal) a better understanding of what happened during covid that really 'worked' for communities and from that, what constitutes a 'resilient community' and what can designers and deliverers of public and voluntary services do that will best support and enable their future development.

**What changes do we want to see** (outcomes) designers and deliverers of public and voluntary services use the understanding and insights gained from the project to more effectively support and enable communities be more resilient.

**Type of work** - This piece of work is primarily an engagement activity. Healthwatch Gateshead will undertake focus groups, telephone interviews and surveys with people from a wide range of different communities across the borough. We will make use of our many community links across the borough(see attached), and the Our Gateshead website to identify potential groups.

Timescales - Spring 2021 - planning & research design

Summer 2021 - undertake the engagement.

Autumn 2021 - write up and report dissemination.

I suggest using the approach of Appreciative Inquiry, a research technique that focuses on what went well, tries to understand why it went well and how it can be sustained and/or

replicated in other situations. It is an approach that focuses on enabling people to share their stories and as such, works well in both group activities and in one-to-one engagement. Healthwatch staff received training in this approach in 2016.

Participants will be asked a limited number of questions, which may include:

1. How has your health & wellbeing been affected by the pandemic?
2. What has helped you get through the pandemic?
3. How did it help?
4. Who provided that help?
5. What could the designers and deliverers of public and voluntary service now do that will sustain that support.

The results from the engagement activities will collated and written up. We will focus upon identifying common themes of 'what worked' across communities, but also share any insights that are specific to particular communities. The resulting report will be shared with participants, Gateshead health & social care providers and decision makers, and any other stakeholders.

**Resources required** - Staff/consultant time to undertake the planning, delivering and write up of the project. Plus, staff support time to publicise the various engagement activities and support write up and dissemination. I would suggest the time involved will vary at different points in the project but should range from 1/2 day to 2 days a week, of staff or consultant time.

**Who to collaborate with** - In order to make most effective use of the limited capacity of the Healthwatch team and the limited timescales available, I would suggest a collaborative approach to this work, Healthwatch Gateshead could approach the many small, community-based groups it already has knowledge of, and use its links with Gateshead Council and Connected Voice (including Haref) to identify groups who may wish to take part in the research. It could then work with those groups to deliver the research.

**Impact and how we will demonstrate this.** The impact will be that some of positive changes experienced by communities during the Covid pandemic are sustained and replicated across Gateshead. This could be demonstrated by follow up research to ascertain whether this is the case. Another impact will be improved Healthwatch relationships with the groups involved in the project, some of whom may be traditionally 'hard to reach'.

**Recommendations for committee:** - to accept the project outlined above as the basis for the work Healthwatch Gateshead will undertake under the Resilient Communities priority

Lyndsay Yarde  
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