



**Communities in their  
Places:  
A review of example  
social action across  
the Yorkshire region.**

Ben Jessop, Prof. Joe Cook & Dr Katy Adams  
(University of Hull)

May 2026

# Executive Summary

**This report presents a comparative review of social action initiatives in the Yorkshire and Humber region. Importantly, this review is not a review of voluntary sector organisations or local government processes for engaging communities per se. Rather it is an attempt to understand the rich range of community social action already underway in the region through drawing on learning from existing community initiatives.**

The definitions of community-led and community partnered social action were developed in collaboration with North Yorkshire Council's Localities team and their partner Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) organisations. For the purposes of this report community social action is defined as:

## **1) Community initiated, owned and controlled ('community-led')**

Where communities are taking the initiative to act on the needs of their local area around economic or environmental issues or other issues that are important to them. This can involve collaboration and connections to larger organisations or to local authorities, but the lead and initiative is being taken by the community themselves.

## **2) Local Authority or VCFS initiated ('community partnered')**

Where the social action is initiated by council or VCFS organisations but is done so in partnership with communities and may still be led by communities themselves. This involves communities being part of defining & driving and involves shared decision-making. As with community-led the areas of focus can be economic, environmental or other important challenges.

The research team conducted a desk-based review of social action initiatives, supported by conversations with VCFS and public sector partners around the region who provided further information and examples of community social action in their communities. Data analysis was limited by the publicly available information and the embedded and often unrecorded nature of community-led action. Other limitations included the range and scale of the region. Consequently, this review is not exhaustive but represents a robust sample of initiatives and activities taking place within the region.

## **Key Findings**

The report identified four overarching themes, the key findings and learning from these are summarised below.

### *Motivations for participation*

- These provide an understanding of why people come together, how they coalesce around ideas and how they organise priorities.
- Most social action focused around either:
  - a) some type of physical, tangible space and its potential (environmental); or
  - b) a demographic group or community that they see as requiring specifically targeted support or action.
- Initiatives also differed around flexibility of aims:
  - Those with set aims tend to have clear objectives and a plan to work towards, usually focused on a single issue - positioning their environment as central to the action.

- Whereas those with flexible aims allow for action to be responsive developing their offer in conjunction with community need/preferences. Thus their community is positioned as central to the action.
- A key motivation for people engaging in social action is that they come together to fill gaps in support or action and that they consider the community is best placed to understand how to address.
- Engaging other members of the community on these issues helps connect local people who individually may not be able to effect change and build collective local voice. This enables initiatives/activities to be tailored to local contexts in a way that makes them more relevant and effective.
- Informally structured social action benefited from agility and an ability to adapt to changing needs of the community from which they draw their members. They are able to welcome broader community participation and ground their approach in local insight.
- Formally structured social actions are able to guarantee a level of engagement and targeted support with the community they work with but had some limitations around flexibility and the roles wider community members were able to play.
- Formally composed examples may evolve over time starting with more informal structures but as actions grow in size/resources this may lead to more formalisation.

### *Ways of working*

- Two key themes were identified: i) values that underpin their ways of working; and ii) organisational structure. These are important for understanding what makes action successful and effective
- Values were found to be either person-centred & strengths-based or centred around an ideal/cause:
  - Person-centred & strengths-based social action recognise and build on participants' strengths, creating opportunities/spaces to engage and contribute. Emphasis is upon flattened power relations which enable participants to lead on actions.
  - Ideal/cause centred initiatives value the potential and perspectives of participants but this is in the service of that particular cause.
- Organisational structures differed between informal or more operationally formal structures.
- External relationships were identified with:
  1. VCFS and other social action initiatives included project-based; collaborative networks; and more general supportive/cooperative relationships.
    - Relationships with VCFS organisations and other initiatives are often horizontal and collaborative in nature involving power sharing and pooling of resources.
  2. Local/regional authorities included a combination of funding and commissioning, advisory and consulting; and strategic where they work together to align goals.
    - Relationships between local authorities and social action initiatives tend to be more hierarchical and of a commissioned nature.

- While they offer a platform for influencing policymaking they are subject to limitations around alignment with local authority priorities.
- Key learning around smaller informal social action initiatives is that they benefit from more general supportive and cooperative relationships that require less resource investment and are focused on collaborating around a shared interest. These offer collective responses without rigid structures and provide an opportunity for all partners to learn and build capacity.
- At community level benefits included increased social cohesion, sustainability and environment impact and community resilience and empowerment
- Wider societal impacts included influencing policy and contributing to wider social movements.
- We need to consider if the metrics used to judge effectiveness need to change as many of the benefits are less tangible outcomes which are missed by linear measurement approaches. e.g building resilience and capacity to navigate etc.

### *The benefits of social action*

- The review found that there is very little data available around the impacts and outcomes from social action initiatives but that this does not mean these initiatives do not have very real impacts for individuals and communities.
- This data/evidence gap relates directly to two issues:
  1. This data is often not available in the public domain.
  2. This knowledge is rarely written down and gathered in a systematic way
- Where it is possible to evidence, we see social action positively impacting at individual, community and wider societal levels
  - At individual level benefits included increased social connection and wellbeing; skills development and empowerment; and better access to support structures and resources.

# Policy Recommendations

## **A broader approach to what constitutes evidence is needed, that goes beyond using limited linear metrics to capture strengths-based outcomes and impacts.**

Benefits to communities are complex and relational and often missed by current evidence measures designed to capture problem-action-outcome types impacts. Strengths-based evidence measures need to capture the values and context, ways of working/activities and outcomes and impacts at individual, community and system level (Cook et al., 2024a, 2024b; Burchell et al., 2026).

These include simple but effective process data collection combined with qualitative participant and community journeys or case studies. The implementation of these tools is central to the next stage of YPIP's communities outreach work.

## **Upskill communities to effectively evidence their work with relational and strengths-based-tools.**

Research teams and practitioners engaged with communities can play a vital role in supporting skills development around evidencing how social action contributes to individuals, communities and the wider society/public service systems.

Examples of research teams and tools include [Strengths-Based Model \(Universities of Hull and Sheffield\)](#), and the [Ideas Fund \(University of Hull\)](#), Ripple Effect Mapping (Chazdon, et al., 2017) and HDRCs in our region which are supporting VCFS engagement in research.

## **Be flexible and responsive in how you engage communities recognising the insight and value they bring.**

Social action comes from communities with vested interests and local knowledge. It is vital to support social action by responding to what communities identify they need without imposing other priorities or structures, or subsuming them under these agendas. This involves adapting policy and research agendas and being open to how they can be a better fit with or be more responsive to community led-values and objectives.

## **A policy for all social action works for none.**

Effective social action is rooted in local relationships and community insight, not standardised policy frameworks. This report highlights how diversity of focus, values and ways of working allows social action to respond to community or environmental priorities.

Enabling co-production and prioritising mechanisms that facilitate trust, knowledge sharing and collaboration that is inclusive and lead by the communities themselves reduces the risk of misaligned interventions. These bespoke approaches allow for support to be adapted to context, strengthening the sustainability of social action.

### **Widen, flexibilise and level access to funding opportunities.**

Current funding structures with complex applications and short timeframes restrict smaller or more informal social action groups from accessing support. Simpler, more flexible approaches can enable timely, locally relevant action. Some of these already operate within local authorities such as community chests and more complex resource intensive options around asset transfer. However, different forms of resources need to be considered such as funding better social infrastructure (JRF, 2026), capacity support or appropriate financial compensation through growing micro-grant avenues or community anchor funding.

Adopting these approaches ensures funding is accessible, responsive and better aligned with the needs and priorities of diverse social action initiatives.

These recommendations are not without their challenges for local authorities which are themselves facing significant financial constraints and struggling with the rising costs of meeting statutory responsibilities. Investment in community social action is an investment upstream which delivers longer-term outcomes and impacts that can offer substantial benefits and as well as cost savings.

Relatedly, enabling communities to define their own needs and actions helps contribute to local neighbourhood engagement strategies which supports the delivery of local and national policy drivers, for example around Pride in Place and the National Neighbourhood Health Implementation Programme.



# Contents

01

Introduction

02

Methodology

03

Theme 1:  
Motivations for  
participation

04

Theme 2: Ways of  
working/operating  
principles

05

Theme 3: External  
Relationships of  
social actions  
initiatives

06

Theme 4: Benefits  
of social action

07

Report summary

08

References

# Introduction

**The Yorkshire and Humber Policy Innovation Partnership (YPIP)** brings together researchers from the region's 12 universities with Yorkshire and Humber policy stakeholders, local and combined authorities, the business sector, voluntary and non-profit organisations and enterprises, and communities. It aims to demonstrate how a more inclusive, sustainable and resilient region can be achieved by creating multi-sectoral partnerships that engage communities in policy processes. Importantly, YPIP seeks to understand how co-design can support policy innovation that is co-produced and, in turn, lead to more equitable/sustainable outcomes.

To achieve this, YPIP builds on existing multi-sectoral relationships between academics, local government and community organisations across the region. It aims to empower low income, marginalised and or spatially isolated communities through 'working with' rather than 'doing research on'. As part of this, the Communities in Their Places cross cutting theme sits across all work packages to place communities at the heart of YPIP, understanding their needs and experiences and incorporating these within its co-produced decision-making structures.

The Communities in Their Places cross cutting theme involves several stages of work, including the review of community-led and community-partnered social action across the region. This report presents the findings of the comparative review of example initiatives. It addresses significant gaps in available knowledge by identifying the critical parameters of social action initiatives and by analysing what makes them

effective, underlying motivations for engagement, ways of working and the benefits they bring to communities.

Importantly, this review is not a review of voluntary sector organisations or local government processes for engaging communities per se. Rather it is an attempt to understand the rich range of community social action already underway in the region through drawing on learning from existing community initiatives. As New Local suggest, community power is 'very much a collection of approaches and practices, rather than a rigid model' and bringing together the learning from many localised approaches 'help to tell the wider story of community power' (2021: 95; 97). This review is intended to draw out learning and recommendations for stakeholders, demonstrating how working with communities can lead to more effective outcomes for communities. In doing so, it adds to the available literature by providing further evidence of how communities are making effective change for themselves. In doing so, it adds to the available literature by providing further evidence of how communities are making effective change for themselves.

# Methodology

The methodology of this review is underpinned by principles of Participatory Action Research, 'working with' local communities as opposed to 'doing research on' them (Bradbury 2015).

In doing so, it prioritises working with practitioners, communities and individuals in research and producing outcomes that benefit all stakeholders and going beyond the production of academic knowledge. These co-design principles underpinned the review process and ultimately, the identification of which social action initiatives were included in this review.

The first stage of the review process was to work in partnership with a collection of VCFS organisations and the Localities Team in North Yorkshire Council to identify exactly what kinds of social action activities we were aiming to examine. This co-design work led to the development of our working definitions of examples detailed below.

Two forms of social action were defined and then sense-checked through our collaboration with North Yorkshire Council's Localities team and their partner VCFS organisations. In doing so, it set the parameters for what would be included in the review:

## *Community initiated, owned and controlled ('community-led')*

Where communities are taking the initiative to act on the needs of their local area around economic or environmental issues, or other issues that are important to them. This can involve collaboration and connections to larger organisations or to local authorities, but the lead and initiative is being taken by the community themselves.

## *Local Authority or VCFS initiated ('community-partnered')*

Where the social action is initiated by council or VCFS organisations but is done so in partnership with communities and may still be led by communities themselves. This involves communities being part of defining & driving and involves shared decision-making. As with community-led the areas of focus can be economic, environmental or other important challenges.

Following on from this co-design process, the Communities in Their Places research team began searching for appropriate initiatives by conducting a desk-based review of social action initiatives that were identifiable via websites.

This was done using a combination of terms that were common to social action in searches. It soon became apparent that this method was unlikely on its own to generate enough examples and the kinds of detail required to conduct a substantive and inclusive review. This was for two main reasons.

Firstly, much of community-led and partnered social action exists in people's experiences and may never reach the web or be written into publicly available reports.

Secondly, many VCFS organisations work in a community partnered way on specific social action initiatives.

As such, they are too numerous to include every possible initiative in the review. Therefore, the research team adopted the approach of going beyond desk-based review to include initiatives identified by local stakeholders from the public and voluntary sector. A full list of examples identified can be found in the Appendices (see Appendix 1).

To extend the review base, the research team contacted VCFS and public sector officers around the region asking them for information about social action initiatives they were aware of (also in Appendix 1). These were then reviewed so they could be considered for inclusion.

This extended the sample size considerably from 78 examples to 112 examples (an expansion of 34, or 30%) and enabled the review to be broadened to include examples that were not readily accessible through online searches.

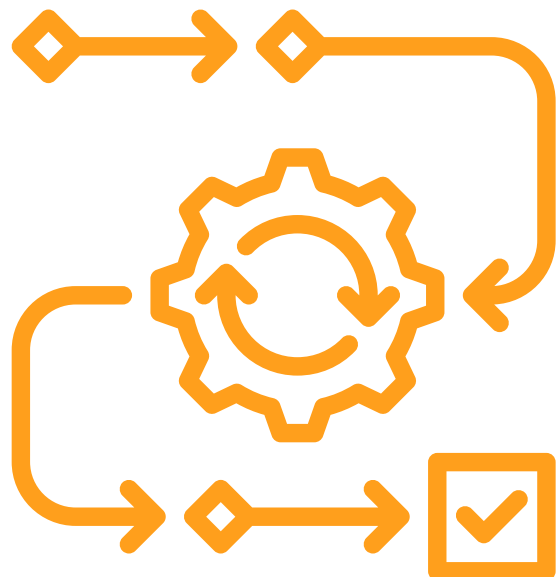
Importantly, it enabled the identification process to be more co-produced and to take on board the community insight and experiences of stakeholders beyond simply the interpretations of the research team.

This review is not intended to be exhaustive of all possible examples that exist in our region. It is however, a diverse and varied sample which creates a strong foundation from which to compare and contrast social action initiatives' ways of working to derive learning to inform how to more effectively support these initiatives and their growth across the Yorkshire and Humber region.

A spreadsheet was used to maintain records of the examples identified, after which a thematic analysis approach was used to identify key themes by 'identifying what is common' and 'making sense of those commonalities' (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

An iterative inductive process of theme identification was used: reviewing and initially coding emerging themes, triangulating through discussion with the wider research team and informed by previous research on community engagement.

The final themes selected were those that consistently emerged from the social examples. Themes included: Motivations for participation; Ways of working / Operating principles; External relationships of social action initiatives; and Benefits of social action (see Table 1)



**Table 1: Themes and sub-themes indentified in the review**

Overarching themes	Sub-themes	Description
Motivations for participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus: environment and spatial or demographic community</li> <li>• Flexibility of aims: fixed aims or flexible aims</li> </ul>	Provides an understanding of why people come together and how they coalesce around ideas and how they organise priorities.
Ways of working/ operating principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Values: person-centred &amp; strengths-based or ideal/cause centred</li> <li>• Organisational structure: informal and flexible structures or formal organisational structures</li> </ul>	Demonstrates how ways of working can at times be informed by aims and values as well as structuring how social action responds to issues they engage with.
External relationships of social action initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationships with the VCFS and other social action initiatives</li> <li>• Relationships with local councils and regional authorities</li> </ul>	Demonstrates how for some social action, specific types of external engagement is a vital aspect of achieving their aims, whereas for others it is more around adding capacity.
Benefits of social action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits to the individual</li> <li>• Benefits to the community</li> <li>• Benefits to wider society</li> </ul>	Demonstrates how social action fills the gaps and meets needs unmet by public services and policy.

These themes provide a structure for understanding how the reviewed social action initiatives form around community priorities, providing insight into their action and ways of working. Importantly, the sub-themes demonstrate that there is no one-size fits all approach to effective community-led or partnered social action. As such, this suggests that policy makers and other stakeholders need to understand the particularities of what a social action is seeking to achieve and how best to support it as scaling and replicating may not be possible (Involve, 2011).

# Theme 1: Motivations for participation

Understanding motivations for social action identifies how and why participants set goals, navigate challenges and opportunities, and what drives them to both begin and continue their activity.

Two aspects of motivational drivers were found across examples:

- i) Whether the focus and motivation was the environment or community
- ii) How flexible their aims were

Understanding the focal point of social action offers insight into what communities come together around, how they identify an idea/common goal and how this acts as the cornerstone for their work. In doing so it adds evidence to New Local's argument that communities are 'well placed to identify and respond to any challenges' by demonstrating how this occurs in different contexts (2021: 8).

Examining the motivations of the social action activity thus provides understanding around direction and sense of purpose. An action's aims also create a sense of cohesion and mission for its participants, providing a focal point and a structure for decision-making that is aligned with their goals. Further, a collective goal can give communities an impetus to continue in the face of challenges and difficulties. As such, focusing on the motivation of social action helps to provide insight into why people participate as well as understanding their chosen focus.

## **i) Focus: environment and spatial or demographic community**

Most social actions focused around either: a) some type of physical, tangible space and its potential; or b) a demographic group or community that they see as requiring specifically targeted support or action. In some instances, there is a combination of the two or an overlap but one is usually prioritised. Importantly, these motivations are a driver for people across all instances, showing how social actions are 'umbilically linked and responsive to local priorities and context' (New Local, 2021: 90).

### *a) Environment as focus (n= 48/112 examples)*

An environmental focus involves either maintaining/protecting something about the location or improving on it and can involve either natural or built environments. Work towards this goal revolves around utilising social action for an environmental impact. These social acts may be direct environmental activity or campaigning.

A focus on the natural environment may involve redressing damage that has been created through neglect or maintaining what exists in its current state and protecting from future degradation (see also Involve (2011)). Participants may take control of uncared-for or forgotten features in their environment and look to re-wild or reappropriate its use to meet the needs of the community.

These actions are likely to focus on smaller geographical spaces that they can physically manage themselves. Actors may also be motivated to make an impact locally in service of a wider goal beyond their community such as reducing carbon impact.

Social action initiatives looking towards limiting future harmful effects are engaging with big picture global issues like climate and biodiversity. As such, they require enhanced local knowledge for targeted action and increased engagement. These may be initiated by participants that feel they have this capability or resource. However, by engaging other members of the community on these issues helps connect local people who individually may not be able to effect change, build collective local voice and the ability to tailor initiatives to local contexts - making them more relevant and effective.

Whether looking towards limiting previous damage or maintaining a space for the future, these initiatives involve participants seeking to instil a sense of pride in nature, the environment and place which may increase community cohesion and belonging. They consider it as something important to their lives that they want to influence and change.

With a focus on the built environment, there is already some form of built structure that the social action is oriented towards. They engage with external stakeholders like local authorities, businesses or community organisations for example, around the regulations, ownership and usage of built structures. As examples, they are often community-led, as the building exists within a locality and is more of a priority for residents than for external individuals due to the immediate impact it has on their community.

It may be that it has been part of local authority ownership that no longer is prioritised or efficient to run, or privately owned and is intended to be used in a way that is detrimental to the community, or unprofitable to maintain. It is the local insight of residents and how they navigate the built environment in their daily lives that lead these initiatives to be community-led.

### Vignette 1: Environment as focus

The **Community Allotments** initiative from **EMS Yorkshire (Hull)**, is a community-partnered initiative focused on taking unused land that has fallen into disrepair and turning it into community allotment plots and edible gardens. EMS Yorkshire identify pieces of land in communities that have become overgrown and unmanageable. They work with residents to develop skills and foster cohesion through pairing up skilled gardeners and novices. The opportunity provides a space for communities to come together, make use of neglected and deteriorated public spaces and grow their own food and improve the environment within communities.

**Sustainable Swaledale** is a volunteer organisation that is community initiated and owned. They seek to reduce the carbon footprint across the area and connect people with nature via environmental enhancement and sustainability projects. In doing so, they look to negate the future impact of climate issues and the environment. Importantly, though the primary focus is a natural environment, there is a large social dimension to the work. This social engagement is part of the aim as it involves educating others and attempting to spread a wider message, engaging other stakeholders in the process. They engage with large organisations to help educate on specific pieces that the community requires which they then use to continue work within their community.

### Vignette 1: Environment as focus continued...

Little London is a housing estate in Maltby, built to provide homes for workers from Enfield who were moved up north to work a munitions factory during WW2. Over time, ownership of the estate has changed private hands, properties have been neglected, and two blocks have been derelict for nearly a decade. Those houses that remain are poorly kept, with mould and damp issues being prevalent. The community has come together to form **Big Power for Little London (BPLL)**. They are supported by New Economics Foundation in their work, remaining community-led. BPLL's aims are to seek the improvement of their community through retrofitting the usable housing and demolishing the derelict blocks and creating a community area. They are engaging the local authority and local politicians to add a voice to engage with the landlord to seek change. They continue to use this relationship with stakeholders to seek to take control of a green space in the area as well.

Both natural environment examples engage with nature in different ways. EMS Yorkshire look to improve on a damaged environment, improving it and giving it use for the community whilst Sustainable Swaledale look to protect the future of their environment. They work at different levels, with the former focusing on the hyper-local and the latter on a community's role in a bigger issue. The approach by BPLL focuses on the hyper-local built environment through a wider engagement. Whilst community-led, the support from New Economics Foundation allows them to access resources and develop skills that enable them to continue to focus their work. Whilst they have different scales of action, all bring communities together around an environment.

#### *b) Community as focus (n= 64/112 examples)*

Over half of the examples have an identified group in mind and come together to engage with, and support, that specific group.

They organise either around a specific demographic group or a physically rooted, often hyper-local community. They aim to limit negative impacts on or uplift and empower/engage that group/community.

What clearly distinguishes demographic community focus from spatial community focus is that the former is anchored by a shared identity (age, gender, etc.) and the latter are anchored by a shared space. Rather than having a specific external factor as a focus and utilising community skills to achieve it, community-focused groups look internally and focus on community experiences, needs and strengths.

Social action initiatives who have community as their focus look at both mitigating the impact of issues, understand how the community wants to address these and to modify structures of inequality to improve possibilities and opportunities for people. Community-owned and initiated examples often focus their attention inwards to empower communities to make positive change. Examples that seek to modify structures of inequality to improve opportunities for people do this through advocacy, supporting participants and each other to make changes. Since the issues being addressed are embedded within wider society, to achieve change social action initiatives often need to engage with external stakeholders.

Examples with this focus were found to be both community-partnered and community-led. Those that were started by initiatives within the VCFS seek to empower a demographic through engagement and use that community experience and knowledge in combination with their ability to influence wider systems.

Those that are community-led engage with partners to influence wider systems but maintain the ability to set what they feel are appropriate goals.

## Vignette 2: Community focused examples

**Sharrow Community Forum** (Sheffield) is a community-led example that prioritises activities and projects driven by the needs and desires of the local community to improve Sharrow. Based in an area of Sheffield with an ethnically diverse population, they co-produce strategies and outcomes based on the skills and needs of the community. They are engaged by and partner with other community stakeholders. One such example of their work is the 'Mount Pleasant Park Masterplan' where they were engaged by South Yorkshire Police, a local primary school and the council to work with residents to understand how to make the park safe and desirable and create a shared sense of responsibility.

**North Halifax Strategy**, a local authority initiated but community-led project, approaches their work in a similar fashion, seeking to understand from the community what changes can be made to make their localities better and how to effect this change with the resource and capacity of the local authority. The plan is to last 10 years from its implementation in 2024, focusing on a deprived ward in the Calderdale region, seeking to use the council resources to work in a strengths-based fashion with the community. Plans so far involve Community Asset Transfers, community deciding where money is spent and bringing in other partners to support the community in achieving their own goals and aims.

**Voice Speak Up** (Hull), a community initiated and led project with support from an academic from the University of Hull is a self-advocacy group in Hull. The Voice Speak Up group was initiated by the ambition of an individual who said he wanted to help other people with learning disabilities to live full lives and to have a voice in their community.

A small group of people with and without learning disabilities meet to discuss how to make that happen and how to grow a self-advocacy group in Hull, where advocacy services have become compartmentalised and linked to professional structures. They explore storytelling to connect with each other and increase a sense of community and wellbeing.

Whilst they originate from two different places (two internal, one external to the community) they all understand those who exist within place are better positioned to be experts on their localities, leading to stronger impact that builds trust both within the community and with external stakeholders. Utilising local insight and knowledge, they connect in with other resources to build an infrastructure for supporting community focused action.

### ii) Flexibility of aims

This section examines how examples of social action cluster into two broad categories regarding whether their aims are fixed or flexible. Whilst the review considers how the starting point may be different, the desire to make a difference around a topic is a shared defining characteristic of examples.

The review found differences between examples as to whether they began with clear issue-specific aims around their focal point or whether they were more malleable and responsive to opportunities as they arose. Having an overall goal is a core aspect common to all the social action initiatives in this review but having a specific and clear set of aims to achieve is not. As shown throughout this report, this does not determine whether a social action is successful or not, yet understanding the difference enables insight into how best to support and engage initiatives.

### **a) Fixed aims (n=62/112 examples)**

Almost half of the examples had fixed aims. Fixed aim social actions are often started by individuals or groups that have a particular concern and believe they have the skills and/or contacts to enable them to make a difference and where they believe policymakers are not addressing the issue appropriately and they want to fill this gap. They do this through a focus on a specific issue and seek other connections to support this work which will be able to help with their aims through access to funding and support. These initiatives tend to have clear objectives and a plan to work towards the aim they seek to impact, usually focused on a single issue.

Those working towards fixed aims come together in the place they live and care about, using it as the starting point for their work. They may be community-partnered or community-led, encouraging the idea and topic, but giving communities ownership on achieving the aims. Alternatively, they may be wholly of the community, coming together with a specific set of aims. In doing so, they build on individuals' strengths working towards a specified target. Underpinning this is a fixed aim, but how this is achieved is more flexible, with communities taking the lead.

The review identified examples where these social action initiatives were started by individuals who possess high levels of social capital obtained through their occupation, local standing and/or where people have a particular skill that can bring about a positive impact. This social capital is then used to further the cause they believe in. In doing so, they are able to utilise their existing knowledge and connections to build a framework for action that brings in other

stakeholders to engage with clearly defined goals. Having these connections may also mean that they are able to remain focused on specific goals and work with the community towards these objectives. The review did not find clear differences between community-led and community-partnered social action that had fixed aims.

These social action initiatives create a sense of community cohesion and connectedness, a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of community members and strengthen connections between organisations in the pursuit of their objectives.

### **Vignette 3: Fixed aims**

**Zero Carbon Harrogate** are a community of actors concerned about the environment and wanting to make a positive impact by supporting others to live in a more sustainable way. Community-led and initiated, they are organised by two individuals who have senior positions on climate associated committees and centres, able to use their social capital to gain momentum on the issue. They bring volunteers together from different backgrounds and experience, working towards educating the community on decarbonisation and climate action and engaging with organisations and policymakers on climate action. They look to build connections with other individuals and organisations to take effective climate action. Working towards a fixed aim, community members come together, organised into working groups that focus on specific areas that fall under their aim such as transport, energy and advocacy.

**Wakefield District Good Food Partnership** is a community-partnered action that looks to bring together the community with the VCFS and local authority to create a food system that works for everybody. In doing so, they work with the community to understand how to make food healthier, of better

### Vignette 3: Fixed aims continued...

quality and promoting a food system that does not harm the biodiversity and environment. They work with communities to encourage growing fresh food, working on local cooking groups and help with food waste reduction. Doing so, they utilise the potential of communities to make a joint impact and bring in other stakeholders, working towards an aim of health and an improved environment. There is an impact for communities on two levels: the individual; and the longer-term environmental improvement. It brings communities together with a shared goal, improving the health and resilience of communities. Longer-term, it works to reduce negative impacts on the environment through these small manageable steps.

**Green City Action** (Sheffield) works in a community-led way with a focus on environmental initiatives in Burngreave, a deprived ward in Sheffield. They do this through a community allotment that hosts different groups, developing horticulture experience and learning about the environmental impact of their work. They also run a community tool bank, collaborating with other organisations to build resilience and reduce waste, run tree and flower planting initiatives and nature connection events. In doing so, they engage the community in environmental concerns in a way that is approachable all through working towards the fixed aim of sustainable living.

All three examples utilise the strengths of communities in working towards a specific aim. In doing so, they take different approaches in how they work with their community. The community-partnered example looks towards their community to support a vision that is led by other stakeholders, working toward a shared goal that has positive impacts for all. The community-led examples look to the community to decide the priorities and how this will be achieved and bringing in other stakeholders to share their vision.

### *b) Flexible aims (strengths-based) (n=50/112 examples)*

A similar number of examples had flexible aims. Social actions with flexible aims support people within a specific location without clearly defined aims or steps beyond a general aim of improvement. As such, they are not fixed in the support they provide but seek to benefit a community within a specific location or demographic group. Consequently, they are flexible in their activities and aims which are collectively defined. These types of groups are often overlooked in existing literature because of the difficulty placing these into rigid categories since they are often led by community need.

Their strengths-based focus includes building on community/participants' qualities, talents and resources and understanding how these can be utilised for change. This chimes with the New Citizens Project (in collaboration with West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board) (2024) that suggests co-produced action is more likely to build solutions with people in a non-linear fashion and requires an acceptance of 'constructive uncertainty'. The aim of supporting their local area in a holistic fashion is the key driver for flexible social actions and this underpins all the work they do.

Social action initiatives led by flexible needs are more likely to have community focused aims as there is a strong connection between the strengths of the community, the challenges it faces and what it wants to achieve. For those community-partnered actions, having broader aims that are malleable allows them to develop their offer in conjunction with community need and for the community-led action it provides some level of structure to their work.

Their open focus means that the community itself is positioned as central to the action, accessing the sense of belonging people have to a community to achieve goals and aims that are borne of their choice/priorities. In doing so, they often become a key support network that meets the aim of improving the spatial or demographic community.

The activities are often ways for the participants to be involved which contribute to the broader aim, which can be to support marginalised groups, reduce social isolation and develop community cohesion, etc. This may be encouraging participation through providing a space or service that then provides opportunities to further engage. Whilst other reports like the Institute for Community Studies (2023) highlight the importance communities place on spaces that enable different community members to 'use the space in different ways', they underestimate the value of less structured approaches to support (p.3).

A key finding from flexible aim actions is the process of unpacking the potential of the community to make a positive change for themselves is just as important as progressing towards an outcome. In looking to community strengths these initiatives work with the resources they have to make change happen.

#### Vignette 4: Flexible aims

**HU4** (Hull) is an opportunity led social action that is driven by the desire to improve the prospects of the people who live in the HU4 postcode which is an area of deprivation in the city of Hull. Community initiated and led, they began as a project to develop a local park, before expanding their work and took hold of some premises which hold a cafe, food bank and activity space for local people. The group was started by a husband and wife who saw the need to improve the area and have initiated projects that seek to reduce anti-social

behaviour, give day trips to young people in the summer, provide meals and a place to meet for isolated residents and also work on specific needs such as debt advice and healthy eating awareness. HU4 has developed into a community trust and is looking to move into larger premises so they can serve more people.

Gallows Close Community Centre in Scarborough work with the local community on various initiatives that seek to help improve their area. Recent need has been a focus on safety, and they have worked in a community-partnered way on a couple of projects focused on this topic. Working with just the community, they produced **A Different Path** which aims to work with young people who are at risk of being led into a life of crime by giving them opportunities to work towards gaining a trade and connecting them into apprenticeships. Another project as part of the community need is the **Building Barrowcliff Together** project, working with North Yorkshire Police to tackle organised crime through community-partnered work on community-empowered interventions. Beyond this focus, they have a community allotment to meet the needs of residents by providing space to grow and use fresh food. The work Gallows Close does with communities helps in developing community cohesion and building relationships and trust not just with the centre but with the wider community.

**Seacroft Communities on Top** (Leeds) is a community owned and led grassroots social action that look to community need and fills the gaps left by other provision. They look to the assets of the community to set their priorities together in local forums. They work on social cohesion projects and health and wellbeing projects when needed, as well as empowering members of the community to take the lead on other initiatives.

### Vignette 4: Flexible aims continued...

Whilst all three examples exist within communities and focus on supporting them in whatever needs residents might require, their ways of working do differ slightly depending on whether they were community-led or community-partnered in the scope of what they can undertake. The first and third, built from a movement of people looking to make a difference in their community, looking to work on improving participants' and residents' lives, have grown to a stage where they can address different needs. The second, by nature of being a VCFS organisation working with their community are able to bring together other stakeholders and deal with broader issues facing residents.

## Summary of Aims

People are motivated to participate in social action as a result of different factors. They come together around an environment or community. Those who are motivated by a community often have a hyper-local focus within a specific place/neighbourhood that fosters a social connection and the potential of people to become active citizens through building on their strengths.

It is these deep connections and being of the community that enable them to gain local support and build resilience amongst the community. New Local (2021) discuss either 'communities of place' which refers to those anchored by a locality or 'communities of interest' referring to those united by an issue. We found that by distinguishing between people or environment helped to further understand the particularities and nuances of community action and how to better enable their work.

Having a general goal is common across social action initiatives but it does not mean they have a clear set of aims to achieve. What is evident is that a lack of formalised aims does not impact whether a social action is successful or not. Those with more structured aims tend to focus on a single issue and filling a gap that they believe exists, being flexible in how these aims are achieved. In working with, and utilising community members' abilities, they are able to share ownership over the process of achieving their goals, consolidating community connectedness.

Alternatively, in unpacking the potential and needs of their community, those actions who have opportunity-led goals are able to harness the wider potential of the community, responding to emerging needs. In working equitably with other participants and their resources, they foster a belief in the potential for change on a wider number of topics.

Engaging around environmental or community based issues connects local people who individually might not be able to effect change, but collectively they have the capacity to do so in a way that is sensitive to local insight. They share a belief in filling gaps left by other structures and consider that the community and its insight is best placed to address these issues.

# Theme 2: Ways of working/operating principles

Understanding the values and internal organisation of the examples provides insight into a number of different aspects of how social actions grow, attract new participants and conduct their work. Importantly, it shows how change is the product of aims and ways of working.

Two key themes were identified:

- values that underpin their ways of working
- organisational structure.

Insight around these two key themes are important for understanding what makes action successful and effective. Values shape the culture of the action, guide the decisions and influence how they engage with other actors and the wider community. Considering the organising structure of an action helps to understand their reach and flexibility, how they hold accountability and manage risk.

## **i) Values**

The principles and beliefs of social action initiatives underpin their aims and activities, with examples being guided by values and orientating their work around these. Whilst being more abstract than motivations, identifying the values of examples aids in understanding the reasoning behind their work and their operating principles. Values help ensure a sense of purpose, adding meaning to social actions and underscoring how they approach activities. The values of those included in the review were found to be either: a) person-centred & strengths-based; or b) centred around an ideal/cause.

The distinction is not rigid and there is some overlap, however there is a primary driving motivation behind action that aligns initiatives more clearly with one set of values than the other.

### *a) Person-centred & strengths-based (n= 57/112 examples)*

Just over half of the examples had person-centred and strengths-based values. Those with person-centred values seek to work with the local community to enrich their lives and help communities to build capacity and 'help themselves'. These social action initiatives were relationally driven, focused on building relationships and centred on the participants rather than encompassing a transactional relationship to achieve a goal. It is possible to draw a correlation between the person-centred, relationally driven examples and specific types of motivation. Those whose aims are flexible and that focus on the community and the assets they possess often have values that are relationally driven and centre around the potential of people within the community.

New Local's (2021) research shows that person-centred community actions are less likely to be uniform as they respond to specific contexts. This was supported in our review in how person-centred and strengths-based examples also had higher levels of agency for participants.

Looking to recognise, value and build participants' strengths means that there is more of an opportunity to engage and contribute without any specific requirement around what that engagement looks like. These initiatives encompass a creative space where it is the potential for change that is important. This is achieved by opening spaces for people to bring ideas and share with the support of others in the community. The emphasis is on communities' perceptions of what is required and providing the space and structure to make this a reality. This was supported by the Local Trust (2021) research that stressed that a flattening of power structures within decision making spaces enables participants to effectively use their strengths. However, they note other factors such as power and funding hierarchies and formality might limit this.

Creating a horizontal hierarchy & flattened power structures was identified as a key aspect of these actions and their values (Cook, et al., 2025). By doing this, participants can take control of their lives and gain confidence in making decisions that will affect them and lead on the action. Although the leadership may still have a hierarchy and there are still power dynamics in place—particularly in the case of community-partnered initiatives—it is the value of creating a space in which power relations are flattened to enable participants to have more say in their community that plays a pivotal role. Doing so enables them to work towards opportunity focused aims and maintain working in a relational way.

These processes can lead to further involvement outside the initiative, in turn positively impacting the community and wider system. It is the person-centred values that need to be present for this to happen as they ensure the needs of the community and those involved in the action are at the heart of the approach.

This way of working can only have an impact if the values continue and are the reason for the action existing.

### **Vignette 5: Person-centred & strengths-based values**

**Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange (GATE)** (Leeds) are a grassroots organisation led by Gypsy and Traveller people that believe in the potential of the demographic in making positive changes for themselves. They work to address issues facing the community around housing, health, education and social inclusion. They advocate in a person-centred fashion around all these aspects. They run community action groups and residents' meetings helping members to come together to make change in their communities across West Yorkshire. By providing the tools for communities to help themselves, they open the opportunities for more members to engage through a relationally driven approach.

**People Focused Group** (Doncaster) are an organisation that work on community-led social action with a focus on working with people who have challenges in their lives whether that be mental health issues, disabilities or other problems. They value the potential of community engagement to foster well-being and make positive impacts on one another. Looking to the community for their strengths, they look to work on improving outcomes for members of the community. This takes the form of a number of initiatives in their community-led work such as the Community Warden scheme which gives members of the community a sense of purpose through the power of 'people helping people'.

The Peel Project (Hull) centres its activities on community needs and empowers them through looking to their potential to lead the work they do. Founded from within the community and community-led, the activities are co-designed and undertaken by members of the community. They host events, design wellbeing activities and promote safety and cohesion in the deprived area it operates within.

### **Vignette 5: Person-centred & strengths-based values continued...**

By looking to the community for their strengths, it allows for a process of empowerment that is relevant and valuable to the community.

The examples highlight the way in which social action can utilise the strengths of community to achieve positive changes for themselves. They are different types of communities but the way in which they value the potential in members of these demographics as the cornerstone of what they set out to achieve helps ensure progress is centred on the people in the community.

#### *b) Ideal/cause centred (n=55/112 examples)*

Almost half of the examples had ideal centred values which sought to address a specific issue or advance a cause. There is a clear link between those fixed aims and environment examples, as values that connect with an ideal require engaging with specific goals to achieve an outcome. Unlike person-centred values, ideal or cause centred values engage with communities/residents to work towards the cause they are interested in, rather than to open a space for the community to develop the participants' ability to meet other needs. They value the potential and perspectives of people, but in service of the particular goal rather than the changing needs of the community.

The values in these social action initiatives align with a deep-rooted aspiration to improve a particular issue. They are passionate about a cause that they believe is not being given the attention and support it deserves or where they see a gap in support.

It is the belief that they can make an impact on a factor external to the community that separates them from person-centred value examples, focusing on issues such as structural inequalities or society wide environmental issues. This may be to work towards a specific goal for the environment, such as reducing emissions and waste, or improving outcomes of a demographic for a specific purpose, such as more women in leadership roles. The activities that ideal-centred examples promote are usually in the service of their values, such as events that bring people together and build cohesion to bring interest to their cause.

Though they are based in a particular location and work with people within the community, they do this to strive towards an ideal that they value. Working together with the people in their communities can have the effect of building a sense of community and developing people's confidence and awareness of a cause.

As such, whilst community connectivity and cohesion may not be a specified aim or form part of an action's values, it does occur as part of the process - uniting those within a community around a shared cause. Ideal centred actions are likely to seek collaboration with others who are not in the local area if that will help to fulfil the cause. There is no clear distinction between community-led and community-partnered social action here which may be due to the way in which ideal or cause centred values engage actors in benefitting the cause rather than understanding community priorities.

## Vignette 6: Ideal/cause centred values

**Pinewood conservation group** are a local conservation group in Harrogate that work to promote and encourage the conservation of the natural habitat of wildlife in the area and to advance the education of the public in the use of the woodlands by encouraging them to participate in the management of the woods. The community themselves are engaged, but it is directed towards the goal and ideal of sustaining the natural beauty of the woods which was brought under community ownership. The community owned woods faced off against the multi-national company Danone as they sought to expand the Harrogate water factory illegally into the woods, making national news. Pinewood Conservation Group successfully fought them off, securing the continued maintenance of the environment.

**Bameen** work with minoritised communities in Hull on environmental and health community-led strengths-based initiatives. Underpinning their work is the belief that it is important to understand cultural nuances in working towards an environmentally better future. They train members of BAME communities to become "Environmental Champions," equipping them with knowledge on recycling, energy conservation, and sustainable practices. These Champions facilitate workshops and engage local schools, promoting environmental awareness and action within their communities. They have developed a "waste bank" system, allowing individuals and businesses to exchange information about recyclable materials. This platform encourages resource sharing and supports local recycling efforts. In an environmental, but community focused work, their action **Growing Diversity for Hull** encourages food growing within BME communities, focusing on cultivating culturally relevant crops. It aims to foster community cohesion and create opportunities for social enterprises through food-related activities.

**Bridestones Rewilded** (Todmorden) is the first community owned nature reserve in Calderdale. Their work focuses on conservation of the moor, education and engaging the community in the environment and preservation. They focus on community-centred stewardship with the belief that community can make meaningful environmental change. They achieve this through supporting development of skills within the community, educating on different aspects of nature and how to restore habitats and promote biodiversity. In doing so, they empower local community members to take control of conservation and highlight the potential of grassroots climate action.

These examples work towards a specific cause but use different methods to do so. The first and third considers the environment as a priority and focuses its efforts on bringing the community together around this issue. They have achieved different outcomes in service of the cause, all relating to promoting wild woodlands which is a more generalised cause. The second uses a variety of engagement methods in service of promoting an environmental cause with a focus on minoritised communities. Working towards a greener future, they utilise community specific knowledge and processes that engage them in a manner that speaks more closely to their interests.

### ii) Organisational structure

The organisational structure of examples impacts whether and how they can respond to the evolving needs of the communities they engage. It also impacts the extent and level of influence of other members of the community as the more informal an action, the more ability the community has to affect its direction (Involve, 2011). Whereas values and aims may define engagement based on identity and direction, the organisational structure of an action formalises roles, how engagement

happens, with whom and the form it may take. Examples were categorised as: a) informally structured, where they have less defined roles and organisation structures; or b) formally structured, where they have defined roles, potentially have employees and embedded structures. Within these categories there were similarities found between the aims and values of social action initiatives and how they organised themselves. However, the distinction is not completely clear, as when actions grow in size, the need for more stability may lead to formalisation.

What is missing in the review is an understanding of how actions that grow and adopt more formalised structures change the way they respond to community needs. Whilst it would be beneficial to include this, the methods used in this review are unable to document this. A case study approach over a longer period would be able to provide better insight. Nevertheless, the review is still able to note the difference between those with a more informal and flexible structure and those with more formal structures.

#### *a) Informal and flexible structures (n=36/112 examples)*

Around a third of examples reviewed had informal structures. Informally structured examples were found to be started within communities themselves, remaining community-led. As an idea around an aim or values that people in a community possess takes root, the desire to make a difference means that they begin to act as an informal unit. The review did not find a substantial difference between those actions that focused on community or space aims, fixed or opportunity aims, or person-centred or ideal values.

Instead, the difference was tied more closely to the resources that communities had at their disposal.

Informally structured social action examples were seen to be able to act more flexibly due to their lack of formal set structures, demonstrating how they can adapt with the changing needs of communities. This means they are more flexible and adaptable to changing pressures that the community face, able to take a more pragmatic approach.

The lack of rigid structures enables responsive, strengths-based approaches grounded in local insight. This in turn leads to more potential actors being able to be involved as it encourages broader community participation, fostering a sense of belonging, and accelerating action on local priorities. This ability to more easily embrace the community as drivers of social action may be a motivating factor in opting for more informal structures as evidenced in Thierry et al.'s work on mutual aid groups (2023). This is seen more readily in hyperlocal contexts.

This fluidity means that there is a correlation between those actions which focus on opportunity-based aims and those which have person-centred values. This is not to say that a lack of formality to their governance means that they are unorganised. Instead, it is better understood as a question of agility.

However, the lack of formalised structure and commitments mean that these examples can be fragile and there is the potential of such movements petering out when relying solely on volunteer motivation. However, this informality does provide the opportunity to naturally

evolve or pivot their work when motivations or focus change. Doing so, they can guarantee commitments to projects as needed by the community they engage with, potentially employ staff to handle administrative tasks and deliver more targeted support as required by participants. This was particularly found to be the case in examples which had grown and were able to use the existing momentum to develop a more solid foundation for which to continue their work.

Social actions in the review that had employed staff and more formally structured organisations were found in both types of values but were more likely to have ideal values. In those that were person-centred, it was more likely that they were community-partners of VCFS organisations themselves. In those that were environment focused, it was more equally mixed.

A mixture of flexible and fixed aim examples demonstrates that aims can still be flexible even in initiatives with more formalised frameworks. The difference here is that the flexible examples that were more formalised tended to be community-partnered and have the resource and capability to act alongside communities.

This more rigid structure may limit the responsiveness to changes in community needs due to a lower agility or restrictions on the use of funding. Whilst not inflexible to the needs and drivers in the community, their structure means that they cannot alter their priorities as easily as informal examples as they have formalised their goals and priorities, however broad these may be.

This does not limit person-centred values or prevent community focused aims from formalising, as the structure does not prevent them from working in person-centred ways or having opportunity aims. However, it does mean that wider participation cannot be quite as dynamic and flexible as there may be assigned roles and remits.

This way of working can only have an impact if the values continue and are the reason for the action existing.

### Vignette 8: Formal organisational structures

**Getaway Girls** (Leeds) was originally set up in 1987 in the Seacroft estate, one of the largest council housing estates in Europe. They set out to introduce women to outdoor activities, adventure and education due to it being a predominately male area. By 1990 they formalised and constituted themselves to provide a more stable foundation for their work. They have grown to an organisation that employs 18 members of staff and has an active team of volunteers delivering a variety of projects. Importantly, they still maintain flexibility for the changing needs of young women but were able to access funding more easily. They still have a focus on resilience and raising aspirations through skill development grounded in a strengths-based approach but can work with communities, young women and other services helping them continue their work. Having this formalised organisation has allowed them to engage with funders such as National Lottery, BBC Children in Need, Leeds Council and Leeds Community Foundation without negating the strengths-based work they engage with.

**Rooted in Hull** is a community-led social enterprise dedicated to fostering resilience, reducing isolation, and promoting sustainable living through urban agriculture and creative engagement. They work with communities to transform industrial land into vibrant spaces that serve as hubs for residents to connect, learn, and grow. At the heart of Rooted in Hull's mission is the **Gather and Grow** project, a two-year initiative funded by the Two Ridings Community Foundation. This project offers regular volunteering opportunities three days a week, where participants engage in activities such as gardening, beekeeping, and food preparation. Each session concludes with a shared meal made from produce grown on-site, fostering a sense of

## Vignette 8: Formal organisational structures continued...

community and purpose among volunteers. The initiative aims to combat chronic isolation and poor mental health by providing a supportive environment for individuals to build skills and self-esteem. They also do creative and cultural work through arts initiatives that are undertaken in partnership with local arts spaces to connect the community with a sense of place.

**Be Social, Be Well**, a project from **Community First Yorkshire** in North Yorkshire is a community-partnered strategy developed as the result of The Loneliness Campaign North Yorkshire. An all-ages, inclusive North Yorkshire-wide strategy for tackling loneliness, with a practical action plan that organisations can use as a checklist for service design and delivery. The strategy is co-produced with North Yorkshire residents and focusses on five topics: eliminating stigma; making connection easier; kindness in communities; fostering meaningful relationships; building enlightened services. With Community First Yorkshire's position as an organisation with reach across the whole of North Yorkshire, they are able to reach out wider in to communities to increase participation and impact.

The formalised structures of these examples mean that they have longevity and an ability to work with higher level stakeholders and get buy in. The work they do with communities becomes a little more fixed in its approach and whilst there is an elasticity to the work they undertake, there is some level of specified aims and objectives to be achieved.

## Summary of Ways of Working

Social actions underpinned by strengths-based and person-centred values prioritise relationships and the participants involved. Having less hierarchical roles strengthens a creative environment which awards participants agency and an ability to better understand and respond

to their needs and those of the community. By working relationally and with an awareness of power dynamics, it is possible to develop more balanced power relationships which can continue beyond the social action initiative (Local Trust, 2021). By contrast, actions that work towards an ideal/cause focus on bringing together members of the community who have a strong desire to improve a particular issue that sits external to the community. They see the potential in participants to add value to their work through their skills, focused on their shared cause. This can also build community cohesion and develop closer relationships between those involved and the wider community.

As a result of the lack of their formal governance, informal examples benefit from agility and an ability to adapt to changing needs of the community from which they draw their members. They are able to welcome broader community participation and ground their approach in local insight, prioritising relationships within the community they work within over external collaboration. Regardless of their aims, informal initiatives were often characterised by the lack of resources at their disposal. They are susceptible to losing their momentum without firm commitment from those involved.

On the other hand, formally composed examples may evolve over time, benefitting from the stability they have and increasing sustainability due to participants' obligations. As a result they are able to guarantee a level of engagement and targeted support with the community they work with but have limitations to flexibility and the roles wider community members are able to play. Adding this resource capacity is key to co-production between external partners and social actions.

# Theme 3: External Relationships of social action initiatives

The relationships that social action initiatives develop with communities were discussed in Theme 2, but it is also important to understand the relationships that are developed and maintained with external organisations, local authorities, VCFS and other stakeholders. There is a limit to the data available on relationship building due to it not always being publicly available either online or within accessible reports. Therefore, the number of examples listed below should be treated with caution and viewed as incomplete. This limitation highlights a need for further exploration of how and to what extent social action initiatives engage with external stakeholders, what these relationships consist of and what benefits they bring.

Two broad categories were identified:

- i) relationships with the VCFS and other social action initiatives
- ii) relationships with local/regional authorities.

There was also a small minority of groups who had engaged with the national government through lobbying (n=8/112 social action initiatives) which has not been given a full section below due to the low number of examples. There is extensive engagement with both the VCFS and local and regional authorities in the examples included here. However, due to the methods that were used to identify examples, this may indicate a bias as those identified by trusted partners will have some form of pre-existing relationship.

## **i) Relationships with the VCFS and other social action initiatives (n=83/112 examples)**

Around three quarters of examples reviewed had some form of relationship with other social action initiatives or the VCFS.

These relationships took different forms: a) project-based; b) collaborative networks; and c) more general supportive/cooperative relationships. The impetus behind these collaborative relationships varied, for example, from working collaboratively on a funded project, working collaboratively on shared interests, signposting and supporting one another through sharing capacity and spaces. It was not possible to clearly identify which social action initiatives had exactly which type of relationships using desk-based research, as there were often indicators of multiple relationships or it was not completely clear based on available information.

Therefore, there is no number of examples of each relationship type as a claim cannot be made with certainty. However, it was possible to outline what the specific form of relationships looked like and the benefits they brought.

### *a) Project-based collaborative relationships*

Project-based collaborative relationships are tied to a specific strand of work,

rather than a broader wide-reaching partnership. This may be on campaigns such as promoting social justice throughout other organisations or groups, educating community members, engaging with other social action initiatives on a topic they lead on, or developing projects based on a shared interest of both parties. In doing so, the relationship is based around a singular topic and produces an output that is limited in time frame and scope.

However, these still produce many benefits for social action initiatives including wider connections and visibility and visible changes for their communities and may lead to more opportunities for closer relationships with other groups and organisations, jointly addressing a collective issue. It can also provide a basis from which a longer-term and more formal relationship may build upon.

These relationships demonstrate how social actions can complement one another in achieving their aims. One such example is an initiative that worked with ethnically minoritised communities and collaborated with another that encouraged guerilla gardening and reclaiming unused public land. Doing so helped address both health issues and lack of access to food for the ethnically minoritised community whilst also introducing new crops and an understanding of how to engage different demographics for the environmental initiative. In doing so, it strengthened the capacity of both initiatives and widened engagement.



### *b) Collaborative network relationships*

Collaborative network relationships are more informal where actions come together around either a shared interest or shared location. These relationships might develop with VCFS organisations or other social actions and include sharing of knowledge and capacity building for a wider collective. In doing so, they contribute to the holistic development of all communities involved, strengthening the ability of initiatives to continue their work and make a difference for those they engage and support.

Another aspect of collaborative network relationships is that there can be collective advocacy through building a stronger voice in united communities to make a wider impact. Collaborative network relationships help develop new ways of working for social action initiatives that build resilience and community voice.

Importantly, for informal and small-scale social action initiatives, this type of relationship allows them to access broader platforms and gives more opportunities for them to influence system change. This differs from project-based collaborative relationships as it goes beyond a single project.

In the examples, these relationships involved actions coordinating efforts, sharing their expertise and jointly planning activities, and fostering a sustained collaboration rather than one-off interactions. The approach is complementary, enabling collective contributions where each initiative's efforts are amplified, creating broader and more coordinated impacts within the communities they engage.



### *c) General supportive relationships*

General supportive relationships are informal and continual relationships that are driven by community need. They involve information sharing, sharing locations to operate activities from, making introductions on their behalf and cultural engagement efforts. They are a more basic relationship that involves and includes awareness of one another and acknowledging one another's strengths without direct collaboration. These may grow into more solidified relationships such as collaborative or project-based relationships but at this stage they do not involve direct collaboration.

However this type of relationship does also allow for broadening their reach as others acknowledge their strengths and help spread word about their efforts. As such, it is particularly beneficial for informal and small-scale social action initiatives as it can reduce a sense of isolation, increase their impact and does not require much resource investment. Across the examples, a common pattern emerged of informal but meaningful support within communities. Initiatives maintain awareness of one another and acknowledge each other's strengths by sharing spaces, resources, and information to enable community-led activities.

Facilitating introductions or network connection also help smaller or newer projects gain visibility and broaden their reach.



### **ii) Relationships with local councils and regional authorities (n=76/112 examples)**

Around two thirds of examples reviewed had some form of relationships with local councils and/or regional authorities. Like those with the VCFS and other social action initiatives, these relationships take many forms. The different types of relationships identified were: a) funding and commissioning; b) advisory and consulting, where social action initiatives work with them to offer community insight and knowledge; and c) strategic where they work together to align goals that better suit the needs and interests of communities.

#### *a) Funding and commissioning relationships*

Funding and commissioning relationships are those orientated around specific initiatives that have some accountability to the partner. These are usually in areas of shared interest to both policymakers and to the social action initiative and as South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board, et al. (2024) argue, must be mutually beneficial if they are to be successful. They are ones which are clearly aligned with council priorities. The benefit of such a relationship is that the funding enables social action initiatives to build on their capacity, scale impact and offer legitimacy to their work.

However, as it needs to align with council priorities, it narrows the type of work initiatives may be able to do, limiting their reach and impact on other needs of their community.

The review found that where initiatives had been granted local authority assets or funding, social action initiatives were required to focus their efforts on a narrower outcome than their aims sought to achieve.

This impact was seen to be more significant in relation to those with opportunity-based aims. Doing so meant that they would be working towards local authority coordinated priorities that limited initiatives' capacity to be responsive to community needs as they were also required to satisfy funding requirements or asset use agreements.



### *b) Advisory and consulting relationships*

Advisory and consulting relationships involve social action initiatives feeding community insight into co-design or consultation on policies and strategies as they are well placed to recognise community need and assist social action (Institute for Community Studies: 2025) . This form of relationship is more about collaboration than shaping council priorities and strategies. When effective, they allow for two-way communication where the initiatives' communities are understood as knowledge holders (Institute for Community Studies: 2025). There are benefits to these relationships that mean community insight is

taken into account and integrated into policies and programmes to ensure effectiveness.

In the review, some initiatives were seen to contribute expertise to governance structures, for example around land use or supporting low-income communities, ensuring that community perspectives influenced how policies and assets were managed. In another case, the initiative's advocacy work directly informed policy commitments, embedding community voice into the strategy. In doing so in this manner, it made sure that the information was not just taken without the community benefitting.



### *c) Strategic relationships*

Strategic relationships are ongoing relationships that seek to align both local authority and community goals. They involve knowledge exchange, coordination of initiatives and shared planning. As such, they were found more often in well-established initiatives and those that were initiated by or co-developed with VCFS organisations.

These relationships tended to take the form of multi-agency projects focused on regeneration and climate issues. They have a strong potential to make changes to the system but involve a level of complexity in coordinating across different priorities and structures requiring a time commitment not

available to all social actions. An example from the review is an initiative that contributes to community cohesion frameworks across a city involving partners from communities, the VCFS, and the local authority.

Each stakeholder has their own priorities and structures which require navigating. In working together at a strategic level, they are able to address the needs of communities with more resources, and are able to reach more members of the community in a way that builds on trusted relationships.



## Summary of External Relationships

The relationships that social action initiatives develop and maintain with external stakeholders are diverse in their scope and formality and each offers benefits, as well as some constraints to their work.

A key distinction in external relationships between local authorities and social action initiatives is they tend to be more of a hierarchical and commissioned nature. Whereas relationships with VCFS organisations and other initiatives are of a more horizontal and collaborative nature involving power sharing and pooling of resources.

More casual networks are particularly impactful for smaller, more informal initiatives. The key learning from these informal networks is that they are focused on collaborating on a shared interest or more general cooperative relationships. These prioritise a collective response without rigid structures and providing an opportunity for all partners to learn and build capacity.

These are adaptable and developed and sustained through trust and offer initiatives a way to develop resilience, amplify their voice and obtain access to other opportunities.

Trust was identified as key in other studies as well, both New Citizen Project with West Yorkshire ICB (2024) and Citizens UK (2020) research suggests this is not only key, but building on this allows for 'successful and sustainable alliances (ibid.: 23).

Relationships with local/regional authorities provide a larger platform for influencing policymaking but may limit the scope of what the social action initiatives are able to do as they often need to align with local authority priorities.

Relationships where social action initiatives have more agency and capacity to enact change within the local authority tend to emerge from closer connections between the initiative and VCFS organisations.

These are adaptable and developed and sustained through trust and offer initiatives a way to develop resilience, amplify their voice and obtain access to other opportunities.

Trust was identified as key in other studies

as well, both New Citizen Project with West Yorkshire ICB (2024) and Citizens UK (2020) research suggests this is not only key, but building on this allows for 'successful and sustainable alliances (ibid.: 23).

Relationships with local/regional authorities provide a larger platform for influencing policymaking but may limit the scope of what the social action initiatives are able to do as they often need to align with local authority priorities. Relationships where social action initiatives have more agency and capacity to enact change within the local authority tend to emerge from closer connections between the initiative and VCFS organisations.

Despite potentially limiting the scope of initiatives, there are many benefits to these relationships such as a closer alignment of local authority priorities with those of communities, building capacity within communities and the potential to develop avenues for influencing system change. In order to achieve this, local authorities need to be more effective at supporting social action initiatives, enabling them to influence policy change rather than incorporate these community movements into existing structures and priorities.

Much of the existing literature does not consider those informal or flexible-aim social-actions and concentrates on how to achieve this with well-structured groups with more clear objectives.

Thus it misses the opportunity to foster an environment where the working with and building relationships with communities can build much better and relevant outcomes and services for communities.



# Theme 4: Benefits of social action

Social action initiatives bring an array of benefits to individuals and communities. These may involve physically visible changes in their surroundings that improve community wellbeing or sense of pride in place, relational changes or an improvement to people's wellbeing and experiences resulting from the increased connectivity and ways of working.

These benefits impact at:

- i) individual
- ii) community
- iii) wider societal levels.

The benefits may be immediate outcomes and/or provide opportunity for longer term change/impact. It was found that, across the board, social action addressed issues and needs that were left unmet by more formal structures or services.

Impacts/benefits were more readily evidenced at individual and community levels. However, wider societal benefits were difficult to identify because this type of information was either not publicly available, or it had never been formally recorded. This is an issue faced more widely in evidencing the impact of social action and New Local (2021) describe that whilst the evidence of impact is 'palpable, it is not in the form required to prove a case for change according to the logic of the current system' (p.11).

Relatedly we need to consider if the metrics used to judge effectiveness needs to change as many benefits are ones without direct evidencable outcomes such as building resilience and capacity.

Since this review relies on publicly available information, it is likely that benefits and impacts are under-estimated for all levels. Therefore, this data should be treated as incomplete. Where this review does offer insights is around illustrating the range of impacts that social action initiatives produce. This provides a basis upon which to build a more robust evidence-based framework that will hopefully contribute to these metrics. The next phase of the Communities in Their Places outreach research will explore in more depth the outcomes and impacts from community-led social action.

## **i) Benefits to the individual**

Three types of individual benefits were identified by the review: increased social connection and wellbeing (n=79/112 examples); skills development and empowerment (n=46/112 examples); and better access to support structures and resources (n=17/112 examples). It is important to note that the low number of examples found for the latter two types of benefits does not reflect what we know from related research around community engagement and social action initiatives which is addressed in each subsection. This highlights the limitations in available information on impacts and outcomes of community action: it does not mean that these impacts do not occur at a higher rate.

### *a) Increased social connection and wellbeing*

Participation in social action initiatives was identified as growing connections between community members by bringing people together and uniting them around a shared idea or concern. Participation was identified as reducing social isolation and loneliness, growing engagement in community activities. As a consequence, participants reported increased wellbeing, growing confidence to take on roles and activities they previously felt unable to do, and growing community resilience through providing a network of support and action. This evidence supports New Local's (2021) argument that communities who have increased connections are better able to respond to challenges showing the importance and need for further research on this topic. Further, these findings align with Involve's (2011) findings that individual benefits include satisfaction, enrichment and wellbeing from being heard and valued. Across initiatives, developing peer support networks and taking part in social activities were key to producing individual benefits. The next stages of the Communities in Their Places outreach work will aim to grow this evidence base.

### *b) Skill development and empowerment*

Skill development and building resilience within individuals, was discussed in relation to both practical and soft skills. Practical skills such as developing the ability to be an advocate helped build the voice of individuals, with horticulture and repair skills often occurring in environmental focused initiatives. Leadership skills and the confidence from this and developing communication skills was discussed in terms of empowering individuals. The Local Trust (2021) and Citizens UK (2020) both evidence how taking part in social actions enable skill development and empowerment.

The Local Trust show how leadership skills and empowerment results from the space in which decision-making occurs, helping to understand those power dynamics and to mitigate its impact. Citizens UK similarly evidence how taking part builds confidence and demonstrates the capacity for change.

### *c) Better access to support structures*

Participation itself was seen to benefit individuals by giving better access to support structures and resources in different ways depending on the type of social action. Some had a direct financial impact on individuals, particularly environmental ones, such as repair cafes or community energy collectives that reduced costs for participants. Others helped give resources to address specific challenges that were being faced, such as peer support for issues that helped increase resilience and a sense of belonging. These impacts were seen in examples such as those that brought communities together in low-income areas to share ideas, obtain essential resources (like food pantries), and develop a shared sense of connectedness.

## **ii) Benefits to the community**

The review found three benefits identifiable at community level: increased social cohesion (n=68/112 examples); sustainability and environmental impact (n=37/112 examples); and community resilience and empowerment (n=38/112 examples). Again, the low rates of occurrence highlight the difficulty these initiatives face in evidencing their impact.

### *a) Increased social cohesion*

Cohesion, resilience and empowerment were benefits seen across various aims and ways of working, occurring as a natural part of the process of fostering social action and working together towards shared goals and aims.

It is important to note that The Local Trust (2021) argues that this process requires conscious effort and practical steps. An example initiative is how attempting to foster a shared sense of community in a deprived area led to improving local authority owned assets in the community. This has had wider impacts such as a more conscious effort to maintain the assets and reduce waste, the resulting increased social cohesion contributing to stronger community ties. The initiative achieves this through giving opportunities to groups of people who are otherwise marginalised, providing a space to connect, be heard and collaborate around shared goals or ideals. All of these outcomes were reported as strengthening the community as a whole.

#### *b) Sustainability and environmental impact*

The benefits of sustainability and environmental impacts on the community were primarily seen in those projects that focused on sustainability. However, that is not to say they did not occur in others, rather that sustainability social actions focused on this when presenting their work to the wider public. Fostering local awareness about climate or environmental issues brought about behaviour change which improved the physical community and also brought positive impacts on the health of people in the area. Those that worked towards physical actions such as community gardening or repair cafes also brought about further benefits to their communities, reducing costs, opening spaces that were previously inaccessible and fostering connections through a collective responsibility. Environmental and sustainability impacts to the community were also seen in examples outside of those with the environment as a priority. For example, in social actions focused on community, skills that were utilised to improve their environment such as taking care of unkept public land and recycling boxes to keep the area tidy, lead to

a cleaner and healthier environment.

#### *c) Community resilience and empowerment*

Community resilience was also reported as an outcome. The support networks that developed, both formal and informal, enabled communities to better cope with the challenges they faced. These may have been social or economic issues and the spaces that were created where participants could share physical resources, knowledge and emotional support helped to build strength in the community. Similarly, community empowerment was fostered through collective ownership of ideas, actions and in some cases physical spaces by participants. In doing so, they collectively gained control over assets and their own narratives which helped build their collective agency.

#### **iii) Benefits to wider society**

Whilst this review found limited available information on the wider societal benefits of social action, it has been possible to identify two particular impacts: influence on policy (15/112 examples); and contribution to wider social movements (17/112 examples). The small number of these examples further adds to the argument that there is difficulty faced by social action initiatives in highlighting the positive impact they make on wider society.

Influencing policy was not constrained to one area but was seen across various advocacy issues such as autism, trans issues, sustainability policy and housing models. In doing so, social action initiatives provided insight from those with lived experience and a richer understanding of the issues faced by communities.

Contributing to wider movements was noted both nationally and regionally where initiatives have formed connections with similarly focused groups, pooling knowledge and creating impact further than their local community.

### **Vignette 9: Benefits of social action**

**Meadows Nursery** in the deprived area of Shirecliffe in Sheffield started as a Nursery ran by Sheffield Hallam University with a focus on studying childhood development. When understanding multiple insecurities facing families, the nursery manager began to work on engaging not just parents but other residents. This began as a free breakfast club where residents could come together, building and fostering relationships, discuss issues in the community and work on empowering one another to make change. This was the catalyst for change. In the beginning Meadows was only engaging White British people in a highly diverse area, but this has gradually shifted with a developing sense of community cohesion between people seeing themselves united by place. A recent Eid celebration was attended by over 130 people with different religious beliefs coming together as a community. A CIC was developed by a set of parents attending the breakfast club who are now taking ownership of the club, seeking a Community Asset Transfer for an unused council property to continue and further develop a lunch club. In the interim, they have connected with another community centre who have resources but not users, fostering connections within and across the community. They have advocated the impact of their initial work to both the local and regional authority.

**Incredible Edible Marshland** is a voluntary group working together in the villages of Old Goole, Swinefleet, Whitgift, Ousefleet, Reedness and Adlington. They work to create a closer and more cohesive community through growing and sharing food.

Their work began as a group of people cleaning an untended piece of grass outside the village hall into a community growing space, developing social connections amongst the participants. They have supported a local pub that was the heart of the rural community as a place for social interaction. Working on bringing the communities of the villages together, they bring community pride and sense of identity to those in the Marshland through using these skills on community-led ideas.

**Bora Shabaa** (Hull) works with refugees and asylum seekers to help build resilience through working with them to shape and run activities. Working with women in workshops centred around storytelling and creative arts builds individual confidence and fosters a shared identity and cohesion amongst the community. They work with other partners on cultural exchanges and community celebrations fostering wider community cohesion.

All three examples work with different communities in different ways but all lead to positive impacts on communities and participants. On the individual level they bring people together to help build individual confidence and empower them to make a difference. On a community level, they build cohesion through understanding the needs of the community and working in an iteratively way to achieve positive impact. Incredible Edible Marshland provides a sense of community and place through working together towards a specified goal, improving prospects for those in the community. Meadows Nursery has been able to engage and advocate on a larger scale but all have the potential and ability to impact wider society. They all give individuals a sense of connectedness and build cohesion, working in an interactive way.

## Summary of Benefits of social action

The review highlights how engagement in social action can produce individual and community level impacts including improved individual wellbeing, skills, voice and agency as well as community cohesion, resilience and sustainability. It also notes ways in which social action was reported as influencing policymaking and wider social movements. Further, it highlights the limitations of metrics used to identify the success of social action as benefits such as building resilience and capacity are not easily demonstrable but make significant impacts to communities.

Effective social action initiatives develop and foster the potential of actors involved, helping them be able to contribute to their community and improve their own situations. It leads to stronger communities that are more connected and able to fill the gaps in provision locally. This then provides them with the skills and capacity to share this learning and help further other initiatives.

Overall, the review found that there is very little data available around the impacts and outcomes from social action initiatives, which highlights a significant research and practice gap. This relates directly to two issues. First, this data is often not available in the public domain. Second, this knowledge is rarely written down and gathered in a systematic way. These knowledge gaps can be attributed to the following barriers: limited available resources, the informal nature of a lot of community-led and community-partnered social action, and the priorities of 'doing' understandably taking precedence, resulting in few resources being available to support the evidencing of impacts

However, Citizens UK (2021) demonstrate that it is not just the quantifiable change but the increased belief of participants that they can make definitive changes in their community.

The next stage of the Communities in Their Places outreach research aims to help fill this gap, by working with a small number of community-led, strengths-based social action initiatives to evidence the impacts of their work through co-designing and implementing evidence tools across these three levels: for individuals, the community and wider societal impact and policy learning. This research will also offer comparison of examples across the region.



# Report Summary

This review of example social action initiatives in the Yorkshire and Humber region reveals how community-led and community-partnered social action across Yorkshire and Humber is a significant force for local change.

It evidences how and why people come together around ideas and how they organise their priorities. The diverse nature of values and aims of social action is shown to inform how they work with their communities to carry out activities and progress their work.

A focus on a physical or tangible space utilises the strengths of the community to centre work on fixed goals around the environment whereas a focus on community or demographics focus inwards on emerging needs of the community and use the strengths of the community to work towards these. Importantly, they form as a response to what they see as a lack of action from other structures and see the community as having the knowledge and skills to address them by building on collective local voice.

The report also highlights that the aims and flexibility of social action informs, and is informed by, the values of social action. These values tended to be either based around person-centred ways of working or around an ideal/cause. Person-centred values built on participants' strengths with reduced power dynamics, enabling equitable engagement. Ideal/cause centred values were found to value the potential of communities in service of a particular cause. This distinction helps to understand what communities prioritise and how best to engage them without detracting from their mission.

The report found that the more informal a social action, the more agile they were able to respond to changing needs and direction whereas more established and formalised social actions benefitted from increased capacity and resources.

The report also identified different forms of relationships that social actions build with others in the VCFS space and with local/regional authorities. It found that those with others in the VCFS space were more collaborative and informal unless tied to specific projects. These relationships helped build capacity, share resources and foster a wider resilience amongst communities. Relationships with local/regional authorities were seen to be more hierarchical and require investment from social action that did not always result in direct benefits for communities.

Benefits were identified for individual, community and society at large including increased social connection and wellbeing, increased social cohesion and sustainability, and contributing to wider social movements. However, available data on impacts and outcomes is limited which this report and others have highlighted. The metrics on how these are judged are not necessarily suitable and communities would benefit from support in developing ways to evidence their impact.

This report provides a basis from which a more robust evidence-based framework to contribute to developing more inclusive metrics. The next stage of the Communities in Their Places work will address this gap by working with a small

number of community-led social action initiatives to evidence their impacts, demonstrating how effective evidence collection can help demonstrate their capacity to effect change and impact through co-design and implementing evidence tools.

## References

- Bradbury, H. (Ed.). 2015. The SAGE Handbook of Action Research (3rd edn). London, England: SAGE.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101.
- Burchell, J., Cook, J., Thiery, H., Hulme, C., Twiddy, M., & Adams, K. (2026). A Strengths-Based Model for Evidencing the Impact of Second Wave Prevention Programmes in Social Care [Towards a Strengths-Based Model for Evidencing Preventative Social Care]. *Journal of Social Work*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14680173261435142>
- Chazdon, S., Emery, M., Hansen, D., Higgins, L., & Sero, R. (2017). A field guide to ripple effects mapping [Monograph].
- Citizens UK (2020). *Reweaving the fabric of society: Early learning from the Citizens UK community organising growth projects*. [Report].
- Cook, J., Burchell, J., Twiddy, M., Hulme, C., Wilberforce, M., Martin, A., Thierry, H., Ledger-Jessop, B. & Webb, E. (2024a). *Bridging the Gaps In Evidencing Prevention: Key Findings from a Multi-site Study of Local Area Coordination*. [Report].
- Cook, J., Burchell, J., and Thierry, H. (2024b). [A Strengths-Based Model for Evidencing the Impact of 'Second Wave' Prevention Strategies](#). [Report].
- Cook, J., Thiery, H., & Burchell, J. (2025). No longer 'waiting for the great leap forwards'? Advances in local state-voluntary and community sector relationships during Covid-19. *Journal of Social Policy*, 54(1), 121-140.
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation. (2026). *Pride in Place: funding gaps and capacity challenges*. Retrieved from: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/neighbourhoods-and-communities/pride-in-place-funding-gaps-and-capacity-challenges>.
- Institute for Community Studies. (2023) *Community perceptions of social infrastructure*. Research Report. Institute for Community Studies and Bennett Institute for Public Policy.
- Involve. (2011). *Pathways through participation* [Report].
- Locality. (2023). *Space to thrive: The role of community spaces in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people*. Locality.
- Lyon, D., Tunåker, C., Pratt-Boyden, K. and Theodosopoulos, D. (2021) *Power in Big Local partnerships*. Research Report. Local Trust.
- New Citizen Project. (2024). *Putting participation into action: How to support greater use of co-production approaches across integrated care systems* [Report].
- New Local. (2021). *Community power: The evidence* [Report]. <https://www.newlocal.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Community-Power-The-Evidence-1.pdf>
- South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board, South Yorkshire's Community Foundation, & DiverseCity Development Trust. (2024). *Guiding principles to work together effectively on health and care research and ideas of how we might do that in practice*.
- Thiery, H., Cook, J., Burchell, J., Wilberforce, M., Twiddy, M., Nikolova, S., Martin, A. and Hulme, C. (2023). *Transforming adult social care? A systematic review of the costs and outcomes of local area coordination in England and Wales*. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 8(1) 100714).

# We thank you for your ongoing support.

## Acknowledgements

The research team would like to thank those across local authorities, VCFS and other bodies who helped with expanding our understanding of the important community-led work across the region through sharing their time and insights.

### Yorkshire Policy Innovation Partnership (YPIP)

YPIP is a regional partnership working on new and better ways of sharing knowledge and making decisions to improve local lives and places in Yorkshire.

### Get in touch



[ypip@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:ypip@leeds.ac.uk)



[ypip.org.uk](http://ypip.org.uk)



[LinkedIn](#)



Economic  
and Social  
Research Council