

Bath and North East Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board

Our Commitment to a Community Asset Approach to Health and Wellbeing

Principles of the Approach

Connected and empowered communities are healthier communities. There is extensive evidence to support this and show that people's health is positively impacted by being involved in decision making and feeling connected, supported and involved in their local community.

We recognise that communities across Bath and North East Somerset have an important contribution to make to improving health and wellbeing and strengthening resilience. Our communities have a wide range of strengths, including skills and knowledge, social networks and community groups. We want to champion these assets and support local people to build on them further.

This means thinking differently about our relationship with patients and communities. A 'Community Asset Based Approach' is a bottom-up way of working with communities that focuses on its strengths and assets rather than on needs and problems. It seeks to...

... champion what works well in a community, and identify what has the potential to improve health and wellbeing. It values the capacity, skills, knowledge and connections that exist.

... promote communities as the co-producers of health and wellbeing, rather than the recipients of services

... empower communities to control their futures and create solutions which work for them

Health and Wellbeing Board Statement of Commitment

As a Health and Wellbeing Board, we are committed to developing an asset focused approach to the way we operate. This includes:

- Having a conscious awareness of community strengths and assets as part of any discussion and encouraging openness in the way we operate as a Board. Also by ensuring that we focus on promoting health and wellbeing in community settings and opportunities to shift care from hospitals to community.
- Making sure that we are listening to local people about what is working well (including through existing methods such as the Voicebox survey, Connecting Communities Area Forums, Healthwatch B&NES feedback).
- Acting as role models for good practice within our individual organisations e.g. developing flexible working policies so that staff are empowered and supported to volunteer within their communities in a way which suits them.

- Actively considering the assets we have as HWB members and opportunities to use these to support communities (see below for an initial list of ways in which Board members can offer support).

Health and Wellbeing Board Offer of Support

Each community is different and has its own strengths and needs. By its nature therefore, an asset-based approach cannot be 'imposed' from above. Rather, we want to give communities the support and space needed to develop and succeed.

However, we recognise that as key local employers and organisations in the area, we have a lot of assets of our own. If a local community has an idea for improving health and wellbeing or improving resilience, here are some examples of ways in which we could offer help and support:

- **Use of space, equipment and resources**

We have a number of offices and buildings located across B&NES which can be used and hired for local community activities. This could also include activities specifically for the purpose of mapping and developing the use of community assets.

- **Access to local intelligence and data**

We hold a wide range of [information, facts and figures about B&NES](#). This data can help when applying for external funding or support, and can also provide a good starting point for having a conversation about your neighbourhood.

- **Community Asset Transfer**

The Council has a policy of transferring community based assets and services to voluntary groups and parish councils. There is more information online about the [framework and criteria](#) for organisations wishing to apply.

- **Signposting and raising awareness**

We can help raise awareness of local community initiatives and activity through a range of communication methods including our website, social media and newsletters. We can also help signpost people to local community groups through our directories including the [One Big Database](#) and [Wellbeing Options](#).

- **Funding advice and support**

The Council produces a monthly [funding bulletin](#) which provides information about the latest grants and funding programmes available for groups to apply to.

Where [Community Infrastructure Levy \(CIL\)](#) funds are collected from a development, 15% is allocated for spend on local schemes. Projects looking for funding from this must demonstrate how they are addressing the social, green or physical impacts of the new development.

- **Connecting Communities**

The [Connecting Communities](#) programme brings together a range of partners including public services, elected members and community groups to provide an opportunity for people to address issues that affect their local area.

- **Knowledge, advice and mentoring support**

The Council provides a range of [support and advice](#) to voluntary and community groups within B&NES, including guidance on managing volunteers and information about what is going on in the area already.

As a Health and Wellbeing Board, we would like to build on this and offer our own knowledge, advice and support to community initiatives which are promoting good health and wellbeing. Whether that is support in preparing a funding bid, advice about how to set up and structure a community group, or training and mentoring support to community members.