

Reducing crime and improving health in Nothwest Kilmarnock

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Organisation: Strathclyde Police

Country: United Kingdom

Level of government: Local government

Sector: Public order and safety

Type: Partnerships, Public Service

Launched in: 2011

Overall development time: 1 year(s)

Link to the innovation's website

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Description

Using an assets-based approach, the local police force in North West Kilmarnock helped to reduce violence and crime, as well as increased health and well-being outcomes by working in collaboration with residents and communities in order to improve their quality of life.

Talent and skills were discovered in abundance in North-West Kilmarnock in Scotland. In the neighbourhoods of Onthank and Knockinlaw, residents and community groups readily embraced this new approach.

Led by the Strathclyde Police and the national Violence Reduction Unit, the overarching aim was to explore ways in which residents could take greater control and ownership in their neighbourhood in order to reduce violence and the fear of crime.

Why the innovation was developed

Objectives

Develop staff capacity, Enhance public trust, Improve effectiveness, Improve user satisfaction, Increase citizen engagement

- The areas of Onthank and Knockinlaw in North West Kilmarnock are home to 3500 people with a fairly even distribution of ages.
 - Due to higher than average rates of crime and violence, this location was nominated by the local police commander as a Public Reassurance area, which indicated the need for increased targeting and co-ordination of public service resources to enhance community safety.
 - The same area also features in the top 5% most deprived areas in Scotland – in fact, out of 6500 data-zones it features within the top 150 most deprived.
 - However, local people and organisations in this area also had a lot to offer when Hazel Stutely asked them, “what can you do to help others?”
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Main beneficiaries

Civil Society, General population, Government staff

- Local residents
- Community
- Police

Results

Effectiveness

- The local church minister was appointed as chair and a representative from East Ayrshire Council as vice-chair.
 - This enabled a direct link into the local community planning framework and ensured that although the assets work was very localised, at the same time, it also operated within the strategic aims of the community planning framework.
 - Simultaneously, the local community police officers were becoming much more accepted and on first name terms with many people.
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Service quality

Accessibility:

- Collaboration between the local youth project and the local drug addiction service was developed. The significant benefit was that many registered addicts lived locally but previously had to travel 2 or 3 miles to their treatment centre.
- As the service was now on their doorstep they could take their children along who would gain from the programme of services on offer at the youth project. The number of addicts attending increased dramatically.

Responsiveness:

- Police activity was also measured to ensure that key priorities were being targeted. This indicated an increase in reported private space violence especially domestic abuse-related cases.
- Traditionally, this type of violence is difficult to detect as many victims are reluctant to call the police. However, it is clear that the assets-based approach improves familiarity and trust in services – people who have a stake in their community, protect their community.

Other:

- It became apparent that it would be necessary to find a means of coordinating increasing offers of support, which led to creation of the multi-agency Community Capacity Building Group with residents integral to its success.
 - The Group was really dynamic as only the agencies that could impact on specific issues would attend meetings. This Group acted as a filter for great ideas.
 - For example, the local Kilmarnock College representative collaborated with the health visitor to deliver beauty treatments for free to young mums from the area. The young mums felt better about themselves and the students gained invaluable 'on-the-job' training.
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User satisfaction

- A key aspect of the delivery of local policing is public reassurance and a commitment to tackle the issues of most concern to the community. The police were encouraged to attend Listening Events and other community group meetings.
- This didn't mean that the strong emphasis on enforcement came to a stop. Instead, it was being done with the consent and co-operation of local communities. As a result, police activity increased in the form of patrols, stop/searches and offender management.
- Consequently, public consultation surveys in North West Kilmarnock indicated some of the highest rates of public confidence and satisfaction in local police when compared to other areas in Strathclyde.
- Comparisons made with the previous year's rates showed the following results: Public Consultation Survey Results in 2012: Good place to live +25%, Feel safer +28%, Police listen and act on information +25%, Satisfied with Police +21%, Feel ASB issues are being tackled +19%.

Development

Design

The project was started in spring 2010. The starting point for the work in Kilmarnock was spreading awareness and gathering support from public service commissioners for experimenting with an assets-based approach.

In order to get buy-in for this new way of working, Strathclyde Police invited the local council, health visitors and midwives, community workers and drugs counsellors, employability staff, local college representatives and third sector organisations and many more to an awareness seminar.

Once that was achieved, it was time to meet with the community. Initially there was suspicion and mistrust, but as relationships developed, people came on board.

Design time: 3 month(s)

Testing

- By following the community capacity-building framework developed by Hazel Stuteley OBE and the Connecting Communities (C2) Network, a means of finding new ways of joining up all forms of working in collaboration were uncovered.
- This involved following a 7-step model which included a number of workshops on a near weekly basis within the first six months. The attraction for everyone was the fluid nature of the assets-based approach and the realisation that it produced tangible results.
- In addition to the 'Listening Events', an assets-mapping exercise was undertaken to map existing physical and people assets – 'You don't know what you need in a community until you know what you already have'. A doctor was commissioned to train community members of all ages including people who were in recovery from substance abuse, to work as peer researchers across North West Kilmarnock.
- The task of the peer researchers was to identify available resources in the area, establish how local people would like to use these and what the barriers were. This included mapping the physical environment (e.g. using photography) and mapping social resources (e.g. supporting a group of young people to create a community newspaper). The resulting report identified gaps but also highlighted many opportunities.

Testing time: 3 month(s)

Implementation

Tools used:

- Local volunteers took over the management of a youth project with a vision to support and develop young people from the area. Along with their newly formed community group, and with zero funding, they started an after-school club for primary school-aged children, a homework club, and a breakfast club, which attracted significant funds from the People's Health Trust Lottery.
- By now, the word was spreading fast about the regular Listening Events being held in the local primary school. These were informal gatherings held in the heart of the community and used to connect with local people – this enabled a shared understanding of the most pressing needs and priorities to be heard at first-hand. The Listening Events attracted hundreds of local residents and local service providers from all three sectors and helped raise expectations.
- Another example was a local individual who had been raised in the area and had gone on to become a senior partner in a global architect's firm. He was able to advise on the creation of a new community garden and resource centre which he also went onto help design and project manage. The offers of support to create programs from other members of the community and numerous organisations became overwhelming and there was a need to establish a means of co-ordinating and communicating ongoing work.

Resources used:

- Not everything can be achieved without money, so funds were secured to appoint a community catalyst on a three-year contract whose role was to inspire low-level, community-led initiatives.
- That particular role has developed into an excellent template that could be incorporated into existing service delivery models. However, it is unclear what cost savings have been made in monetary terms.
- The local council have embraced this approach, especially in light of the Christie Commission report, and the need to tackle 'failure demand'. They have also transferred a small amount of funds to a local community group to enable them to commission their own services.

Implementation time: 6 month(s)

Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned

- Early indications are that that the assets-based approach maximises engagement opportunities between residents and organisations like the police. There are also some signs that it will positively impact on physical and mental health.
 - All of this was done without any sort of formal funding stream as all of the investment was in people. As the work progressed there was increasing levels of interest from third sector organisations that were happy to contribute resources to enhance sustainability.
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Other information

A high point for this exceptional community came in May 2012 when HRH Prince of Wales, who had heard about their achievements, singled them out for a visit.

A video titled 'The Community Within' produced with music and images from the North West Kilmarnock Assets site:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1l8c3Sq5JaY>.

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