

Building a Children's Community In Newcastle: Update May 2017

Following our last update in July 2016, lots of work has been done to build a Children's Community for the West End of Newcastle. The West End Schools Trust has been driving this work over the last few months and employed Mick Dunn to help them to take this forward, with the support of Liz Todd and Karen Laing from Newcastle University. This update reports on where we are now, almost two years on from our feasibility study that found support for the idea in the West End.

What is our Children's Community trying to achieve?

A number of events have been held with local practitioners and local children at which the following long-term objectives for the West End of Newcastle have been developed and agreed:

1. A stronger community

A vision of a West End where everyone works together, building a cohesive, supportive environment.

2. Reducing inequality

Challenging poverty to ensure everyone can achieve and be healthy, and ensuring people are accepted for who they are.

3. Starting early and supporting transitions

Getting things right from before birth, ensuring healthy child

development and supporting children through key transitions in their lives.

4. Realising aspirations

Aiming high for young people and providing more opportunities for success.

Across these themes, a focus of emotional health and wellbeing was seen as a good starting point to focus on.

What resources does the Children's Community have?

Local organisations have shown a willingness to work together, so that existing and new resources can be utilised to work towards these four objectives. The kinds of resources that have been offered include specific skills, knowledge, experiences, time, digital support, networking and contacts, use of community buildings, and funding opportunities.

Where is the Children's Community?

A key feature of a Children's Community model is that it focuses on a clearly defined geographical area and that every single child or young person aged from (pre) cradle to career is part of it.

A number of conversations have taken place about a suitable boundary for the West End Children's Community. It has been

*Breaking the cycle – achieving
and sustaining positive change
for children and their community*

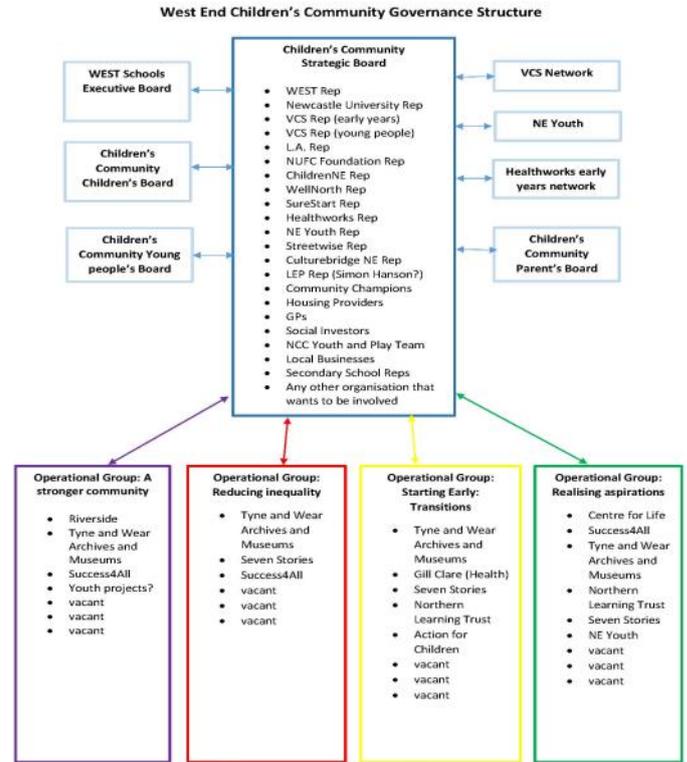


proposed, after consultation, that the West End Children’s Community be comprised of all those children and young people living in, or going to school in, the wards in which the WEST schools are situated, namely Wingrove, Benwell, Scotswood and Elswick. There is a recognition that this may change over time and as other partners come on board.

How will the Children’s Community work?

Every person living and working in the West End Children’s Community is automatically part of that community. However, levels of engagement and commitment will inevitably vary. A governance structure is suggested that is as inclusive as possible but that does not replicate existing networks but seeks to include them.

Any organisation can be represented on the Strategic Board which will act to drive action towards the four long-term objectives. Each objective will have an operational subgroup that can concentrate on developing work in that area, containing representatives with particular interests or skills in those areas who will self-select. Children, young people and parents will also be an important part of the structure.

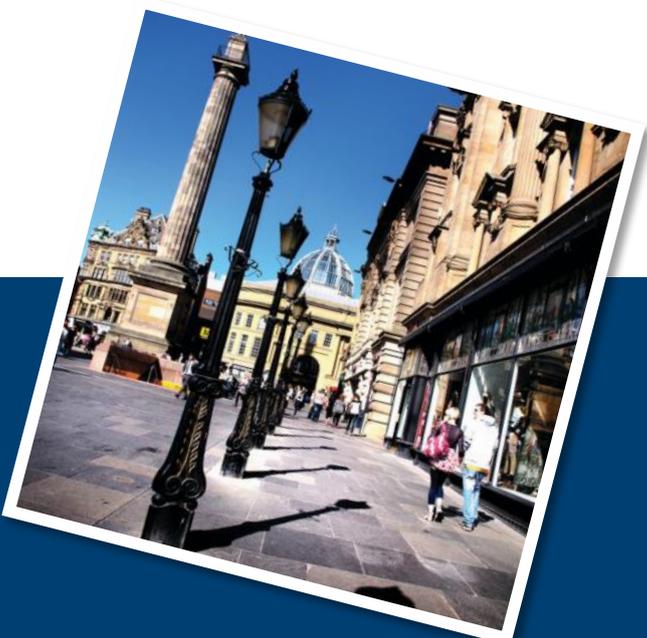


What needs to happen next?

The next steps include:

- Involving other partners, especially secondary schools;
- Setting dates for Children’s Community meetings;
- Gathering the perspectives of parents;
- Establishing a theory of change;
- Developing joint funding bids for some pilot work.

This work will need co-ordination.



How can I find out more, or get involved?

The work is continuing, and discussions happening regularly. We want to ensure that the Children’s Community is as open and welcoming as possible, as we all work together to improve the lives of children and young people in our area.

To find out more, to receive hard copies of the report or briefing, or to get involved, please contact Karen Laing by emailing k.j.c.laing@ncl.ac.uk or by telephone on 0191 2088735.