



Community-led health 'Getting the Message Across' Top Tips!

At our recent 'Making Scotland Better' event a number of participants commented on the challenges of communicating the strength and value of community-led health, especially to those practitioners who are unaware or unfamiliar with the approach. This prompted us to produce these 'top tips'. They are intended as a brief guide to 'getting the message across' about the benefits of community-led health, and offer a route into the substantial body of work that you can use to support and promote community-led health approaches.

Top tip: Explaining community-led health

Community-led health is an approach to health improvement and tackling health inequalities that aims to support community organisations and groups, especially in areas of disadvantage and poor health.

Key aims....

To Identify and define what is important to them about their health

To Identify the factors that impact on their health and wellbeing

To Take the lead in identifying and implementing solutions.

The approach is about working alongside community organisations and groups to bring about social change and influence service provision. Hear from four community organisations and their public sector partners about the benefits of using this approach in our short [Picture of Health](#) films.

Top tip: Setting the context for community-led health

It is often helpful to explain community-led health from two contexts:

1. As an approach that reflects how community members have organised to act on specific health needs which they have identified, and to work together to improve health outcomes in their community. **They may do this through activities such as environmental improvements or affordable and quality food outlets for example.** Building a community garden from a brown-field site and establishing a community shop from disused retail outlet.
2. NHS or Local Authorities seek to work with community members on the planning and delivery of services and create positive conditions for communities to be meaningfully involved and influential. **Community-led health should be integral to policies and practice that are concerned with engaging communities in geographical neighbourhoods, or across communities of interest or identity to support them in the improvement of health outcomes.** For example: View NHS Health Scotland's link to Healthy Communities: Meeting the Shared Challenge. <http://goo.gl/itVyXR>

Top tip: Demonstrating the value

Community-led health brings significant benefits and advantages to health improvement and tackling health inequalities. Check out the following examples:

Community knowledge and skills have informed the design and implementation of public sector services e.g. Mearns & Coastal Healthy Living Initiative, Aberdeenshire.

<http://goo.gl/W9PX1X>

Communities have been supported to have an independent voice and ownership of locally controlled assets e.g. Healthy n Happy, Cambuslang & Rutherglen. <http://goo.gl/TkGHEJ>

Communities have been encouraged and supported to deliver complementary services to those offered by public sector agencies e.g. Eyemouth Healthy Living Group.

<http://goo.gl/jCcKaj>

Communities have pioneered with health providers new solutions to health improvement e.g. use of walking groups and volunteering to enhance mental health and wellbeing 'Health All Round' Edinburgh. <http://goo.gl/u7WXNu>

Positive action through health activity has reached and involved people who have not previously accessed health services Building Healthy Communities, Dumfries and Galloway.

<http://goo.gl/FSwiIO>

Top tip: Compiling the evidence that backs this up

A range of evidence from evaluations, research, case studies, social return on investment, and outcomes from 'Healthy Communities: Meeting the Shared Challenge' has been compiled that shows the value and impact of community-led health. Check out methods for compiling and using evidence from CHEX website www.chex.org.uk and Evaluation Support Scotland: www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk.

Top tip: Getting started

- 1. Does your agency or service have a priority towards community-led health?**
- 2. What's your role and work remit?**
- 3. What's your existing understanding of working with communities?**
- 4. What resources are available to you?**

SCDC and CHEX produced a resource called 'Community-led Health for All' that identified core competency areas for practitioners and strategic managers across different sectors.

<http://goo.gl/kFcdy8>

The Community-led health logic model is helpful in planning and documenting activities that will meet specific outcomes that lead to addressing health inequalities.

<http://goo.gl/bAigt6>

Talking with community-led health organisations and practitioners is a great resource. They will share practice on a range of models from community-led research to participatory appraisal.

<http://goo.gl/z2XbwU>