

Recipe for a Good Life

Dreams for a better future in
East Cheshire, Halton and St. Helens



Contents

- 3 Introduction
- 4 Methodology
- 5 The 5 Ways of Wellbeing
- 6 East Cheshire Findings
- 8 Halton Findings
- 10 St. Helens Findings
- 12 Acknowledgements

References

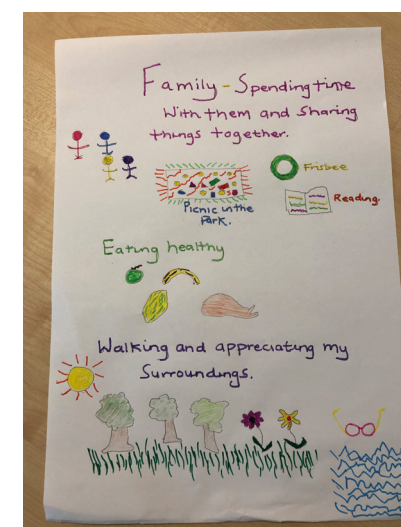
- ¹Levitas, R. (2013). Utopia as Method: The Imaginary Reconstitution of Society. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- ²Marmot, M. (2010). Fair Society, Healthy Lives: Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England (The Marmot Review). Institute of Health Equity, London
- ³Scott-Samuel, A. and Smith, K.E. (2015) Fantasy Paradigms of Health Inequalities: utopian thinking? Social Theory & Health, 13(4): 418–36
- ⁴The NHS Long Term Plan. (2019). NHS
- ⁵Aked, J., Marks, N., Cordon, C. & Thompson, S. (2008). The Five Ways to Wellbeing: The Evidence. The New Economics Foundation, London

About Wellbeing Enterprises CIC

Wellbeing Enterprises CIC (WE) is a people powered social enterprise. Our mission is to help people live happier, healthier, longer lives. We achieve this by supporting people to develop their strengths and capabilities; unlocking the assets and resources in communities and working together with our partners to tackle the root causes of poor health.

www.wellbeingenterprises.org.uk

Introduction



Cheshire & Merseyside NHS Health & Care Partnership funded a series of community consultation sessions in the boroughs of East Cheshire, Halton and St Helens to ascertain what local citizens' visions for the 'good life' look like in the areas where they live.

Using Ruth Levitas 'Utopia as Method' citizens' were invited to dream for a better future through a process of 'reimagining, in a truly holistic sense, what might become and otherwise be' and what steps would need to happen to make these dreams a reality¹.

This project feeds into the regional social value work under development across the Cheshire and Merseyside region which aims to leverage greater economic, social and environmental wellbeing by collaborating across a wider range of sectors and mobilising the strengths and capabilities of people and place. There is a growing emphasis in research² and in policy³ on the need to focus on upstream structural, systemic and societal problems rather than downstream easily tackled exposures that fail to get to the root of the issues impacting on people's lives⁴. By creating a collective vision of where we want to get to, we have the potential to inspire and motivate everyone to play their part; creating greater social value and transformative change.

This project provided a platform for citizens to share their hopes and aspirations for a better future in the places they live, so that efforts to bolster social value are focused on what people want and need locally. This document articulates the change that citizens believe needs to happen to enable more people in the community to live valued and dignified lives.

Methodology



In total, 12 community activities took place across the boroughs of East Cheshire, Halton and St Helens to canvass peoples views.

Participants took part in a range of creative activities to help them articulate their dreams for the good life in the places they live. These included painting, creative writing, collage making and focus groups discussions.

In total 26 citizens participated across the three boroughs. Participants were recruited via existing community groups, and through a marketing campaign which included posting flyers, social media posts and visiting a wide range of public service providers including GP surgeries and housing trusts.

During activities participants were given information about the nef Five Ways to Wellbeing⁵ (see Figure 1). Participants were asked to think about their dream for the good life, and in what ways this dream will enable them to achieve some or all of the Five Ways to Wellbeing.

The 5 Ways of Wellbeing

Connect

Connecting with people around you; friends, family and neighbours

Give

Giving back to your community and yourself. Being kind to self and others

Be active

Being physically active is good for your mind and your body

Take notice

Taking notice of the world around you and how you are feeling

Keep learning

Keeping your mind active throughout life is good for your health

Fig. 1

Key questions:

- 1 Tell me what your dream for the good life looks like in your local area?
- 2 *Introduce the Five Ways to Wellbeing using prompt cards.*
In what ways will you be able to achieve the Five Ways to Wellbeing in this dream for the good life?
- 3 What would need to happen in the short and the longer-term for this dream to become a reality?

Participants at each of the creative sessions produced a range of artworks and shared what these meant in relation to their dream for a better future in their local area.

In addition, focus group discussions were audio recorded with the consent of participants. Audio recordings were replayed, transcribed and a thematic analysis undertaken to identify key themes in each borough and a series of actions that needed to be taken to bring about these dreams.

Participant demographic data

Total Participants: East Cheshire 5 Halton 9 St Helens 12 ● = 1 person

Gender

Male ●●●●●●●●
Female ●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

Age

30-39 ●●●
40-49 ●●
50-59 ●●●●●
60-69 ●●●●●
70+ ●●●●●●●
Not Disclosed ●

Ethnicity

White British ●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
Asian, British Asian ●
Mixed, Other ●
Rather not say ●

Disability status

Yes ●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
No ●●●●●●●●●●
Not Disclosed ●

Employment

Unemployed ●●●●●●●●●●
Retired ●●●●●●●●●●
Part-Time ●●
Other ●
Not Disclosed ●
Rather not say ●

Carer Status

Yes ●●●●●
No ●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
Not Disclosed ●



East Cheshire

Key themes:

Money to live well • A good home • Enhancing life skills
Access to support • Feeling connected

The Dream

- 1 Everyone has the resources and support to take care of their family
- 2 Having enough money to have a good standard of living
- 3 Children and young people have a good start in life
- 4 All people can enjoy simple pleasures in life
- 5 Everyone has a place of their own to call a home
- 6 Feeling safe and secure in one's own surroundings
- 7 Feeling close to other people; having someone to talk with
- 8 Help to change one's lifestyle for the better; feeling supported to make simple changes
- 9 Everyone can visit places in their community that help them feel good
- 10 Having someone to reach out to for support
- 11 People are supported to learn practical skills to cope with ups and downs in life

Key Quotes

"Looking after my children; it's always about the family"

"Help to start again; I lost everything in the fire"

"Go and visit as many places as I can and make up for lost time"

"Being able to take care of my family"

"I'll chat to anyone; I don't care who they are or what they are"

"I want a place of my own; where my grown-up children can come to me"

"Being with people, because I have been very lonely"



Actions we can take right now:

- 1 Access to a wide and varied range of supported, social housing opportunities
- 2 Public services provide access to practical support when times are hard
- 3 Initiatives that make the foundational aspects of living (food, transport, utilities, housing) more affordable for local people
- 4 Community initiatives that provide intergenerational support and tackle loneliness and isolation
- 5 Initiatives that provide practical and emotional support for young families
- 6 Support services for people in crisis; such as a house fire, or being in financial hardship

Halton

Key themes:

Support for children & young people • Learning throughout life
Places to connect • Access to public transport • Access to amenities

The Dream

- 1 Everyone has opportunities to learn throughout life
- 2 People of all ages and abilities fulfil their potential and achieve a sense of purpose
- 3 Everyone has access to technology to keep in touch with people
- 4 There are excellent role models for children and young people
- 5 Lots of local places where people can connect face to face and make friends
- 6 People accept you as you are; everyone feels valued and welcomed
- 7 Beautiful green spaces close to where people live, used by all the community
- 8 Affordable and accessible public transport so people can visit each other and access local and regional attractions
- 9 People have a sense of purpose in life, with opportunities to help others and/or share their time and skills
- 10 There are affordable local shops which are easily accessible
- 11 A community with no (or little) crime

Key Quotes

"Not feeling embarrassed if you can't read []... but feeling supported instead"

"People accepting you as you are; you fit in with them, and they fit in with you"

"Feeling connected with other people is the thing I enjoy the most"

"Parents who aren't only their [children's] best mates; but also good role models"

"Not building on all our green spaces but valuing them... we need to double the green spaces"

"Things that spark young people's imagination; that are magical []... not money making"

"More public seating and places to rest in the community"



Actions we can take right now:

- 1 Public services that help people manage their pain, discomfort and/or overcome any disabilities so they can get the best out of life
- 2 Community initiatives that help people to connect with their neighbours
- 3 Community initiatives that enable local people to get involved and make a difference in their local area
- 4 Opportunities to learn skills and build capabilities
- 5 More public facilities like seating, toilets and car parking in public venues
- 6 Local attractions for all the family to enjoy that require little or no money
- 7 More public information about local services / facilities that can improve people's sense of wellbeing and how to find / access them
- 8 Access to a wide range of volunteering and social action opportunities
- 9 Campaigns that promote equality and diversity matters
- 10 Access to parenting courses and support for families

St. Helens

Key themes:

Support to self care • Staying connected • A sense of purpose
Learning throughout life • Roots to employment

The Dream

- 1 Being able to stay connected with friends and family throughout life
- 2 Having the resources to take care of oneself; being able to self-care
- 3 Access to learning opportunities at any age; recognising that everyone learns differently
- 4 Places to be with oneself, to relax and recuperate
- 5 Volunteering opportunities that provide routes to paid employment
- 6 Having a sense of control over ones' life; being able to make informed choices about ones' future
- 7 Living in a community where there are high levels of trust amongst people
- 8 Having a sense of purpose; feeling as though you belong in society
- 9 Living in a non-judgemental community

Key Quotes

"It's never too late to go back to college"

**"Being able to fulfil your potential in life...
[] Doing what I would like to do []...
A clear path for the future"**

**"Not feeling pressured to fit in; being able
to make your own mind up about things"**

"Little acts of kindness in the community"

**"Having time to myself, a space
where I can rest []... Being able
to say no sometimes"**

"Life has to be more than making money"

**"Being able to re-train []... To start an
apprenticeship at any age. Not being
thrown on the scrap heap"**



Actions we can take right now:

- 1 More volunteering and social action opportunities in the community
- 2 Opportunities to re-train and return to work at any stage in life
- 3 Public services providing support and resources to help people self-care more effectively
- 4 Support to help children and younger people overcome peer pressure and make informed decisions about their lives
- 5 Communities initiatives that help people to manage stress and learn relaxation techniques; including support for carers
- 6 Public places for quiet contemplation and personal restoration
- 7 Supported employment opportunities for those who have been out of work for some time
- 8 Campaigns that tackle age discrimination and schemes that provide equal access to education, training and /or employment no matter what age

**Author:**

Mark Swift, Wellbeing Enterprises CIC

Contact:

Wellbeing Enterprises CIC
Bridgewater House
Old Coach Road
Runcorn
WA7 1QT

T: 01928 589 799

E: info@wellbeingenterprises.org.uk

wellbeingenterprises.org.uk

Acknowledgements:

Thanks to Shelley Brough, Head of Integrated Commissioning, Cheshire East Council and Cheshire & Merseyside NHS Health & Care Partnership for funding this project.

Wellbeing
enterprises

Cheshire & Merseyside
Health & Care Partnership

