Toolbox Guidance Note on *Demonstrating your Difference*

This is a simple *Go to Guide* about Social Impact. Social Impact is about **demonstrating the difference** you make in the services or projects you deliver. There is a wealth of material available on this subject so we have selected the points we think will be most helpful for community groups and organisations in Cambridgeshire. Further advice and guidance is always available through Support Cambridgeshire: simply contact

info@supportcambridgeshire.org.uk.

What is Social Impact?

Impact is the long-term aim or goal you want to achieve. It can also be described as the long-term outcome that defines success for your organisation OR **demonstrates the difference** the organisation makes. **Social impact** is the broad social change an organisation is trying to achieve.

Why is Social Impact important?

There are a number of reasons why demonstrating the difference you make is important. Perhaps the most important is around the subject of funding.

There is increasing pressure on organisations to demonstrate that their services are delivering the desired results. In particular, funders are looking to maximise the effect of limited resources by funding projects that create proven impact rather than just the measurement of outputs only.

Demonstrating the difference you make can be really important.

Let's take the example of a Mental Health Project:

The **impac**t or long-term outcome of a health project might be to give people an increased sense of control over their lives.

An **output** might be the number of people who receive one to one support.

Glossary of terms:

Terms can be confusing so we have listed the most common terms and what they mean:

Social impact	Broad social change an organisation is trying to achieve.	
Impact	The broad and /or long-term effects of an organisation's activity after taking into account what would have happened anyway.	
Outcomes	The changes, benefits, learning or other effects that result from what the organisation makes, offers or provides. Expressed using the language of change.	*(Adapted from NPCs four pillar approach & creating your own Theory of Change)*
Outputs/Activities	Activities, services or facilities that result from an organisation's activity.	
Indicators	The things that help you to determine whether you have made the differences that you hope to make.	
Inputs	The resources that go into the project that a team or organisation needs to be able to carry out its activities.	

Important:

⬤ If you are working with a funder it is always important to check that the funder understands the terms you are using.

⬤ This prevents misunderstanding at the earliest possible stage.

Let's talk Outcomes – the difference you make towards achieving impact:

- These should link the need and your activities.
- These can be soft: subjective and relating to perceptions/attitudes or feelings.
- These can be hard: or physically measurable.

Who – people or organisations who will benefit	How - should relate to change or difference	What – what is changing	The Difference (Impact)
Young people Lone parents People with mental health difficulties Older people who are experiencing loss of mobility.	Improve Increase Reduce Expand Develop Sustain	Confidence Skills Environment Access to services Relationships Opportunities	*Example:* **40 people have more confidence and have developed increased social relationships as a result of your project.**

http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/pub_outcomes_factsheet.pdf

http://www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/media/uploads/resources/ess_sg1_-_setting_outcomes_(final).pdf

Let's talk Outcome indicators – what needs to happen to demonstrate the outcome has been achieved?

- These should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time based)

Outcome	Milestones – progress of activities	Milestones – outcome indicator	
40 people with ongoing mental health difficulties have increased confidence by the end of the project	40 service users attended discussion meetings by month 6. 20 people take part in shopping trips with a be-friender by month 8.	40 people are able to take part in discussions. 20 people report feeling less nervous about going out in public.	*www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/pub_outcomes_factsheet.pdf*

Using a planning tool to demonstrate social impact?

Planning tools describe the key aspects that make a project work.

- They need to be clear and logical.
- They help to structure what outcome and impact might look like, and they link these to activities, inputs and outputs.
- They feed into strategy and review and define what needs to be measured and reviewed.
- There are many different types of planning tool. We have chosen to look at 3 of them and have created a simple work - based example to demonstrate how they are used.

The CES Planning Triangle:

This tool was developed by the Charities Evaluation Service and is most useful for less complicated projects.

The Logic Model

This model allows more detail about activities. It is descriptive whereas the Theory of Change model is explanatory. Both models use logic as their prime driver and for many, The Theory of Change incorporates many of the thought processes of the Logic Model.

Theory of Change Model

This outlines all the things that a programme does for of its beneficiaries, the ultimate impact that it aims to have on them, and all the separate outcomes that lead or contribute to that impact.

It is usual to produce a summary diagram but it can be a written narrative providing situational analysis, articulating assumptions and enablers, evidence and explanations of activities and how and why they will contribute to the outcomes. Focus on changes you expect to occur as a result of what you do. **Keep it clear, meaningful, doable and plausible.**

Support Cambridgeshire believes this model to be the best and most simple to use.

However, you must use a model which fits your circumstances, so evaluate carefully.

Where do I start?

If you are just starting your impact journey, it may be worth testing your current organisational position through Measuring Up: **Measuring Up** is a straightforward, step-by-step self-assessment tool that allows you to review and improve your organisation's impact practice.

Once you have done this, begin to consult as widely as possible with everyone who has an interest in your organisation (your stakeholders) and review all of the current evidence which exists on the services you provide/wish to provide.

Consult your stakeholders to find out:

- What are the most important changes we facilitate?
- How do we know they are happening?
- Are there more important changes we should be working towards?
- How could we make these changes happen?
- How could we involve you so you understand the value we create in the future?

Review existing evidence to identify:

- Evidence of need and demand (simple desk research can help here).
- What resources do we have?
- Who else operates in this area?
- What are the gaps in provision?

Using planning tools to create a monitoring & evaluation framework:

Take care not to design your project around what can be measured – just for the sake of measuring.

Use a planning tool to identify:

- The outcomes you want to measure
- Indicators of these outcomes (what will show they are achieved)
- Sources of data for the indicators (where does it come from).

Let's take a work-based example using each of the 3 models of Social Impact:

The problem:

The social isolation and resulting loneliness of the growing elderly population of Any-town is effecting elderly people's wellbeing and putting pressure on local health provision.

The impact:

To improve the wellbeing of elderly people in Any-town and reduce their need to access local health services by 20% by the year 2020.

The Models:

Let's recap on the models you could use: These are:

(1) The CES Planning Triangle
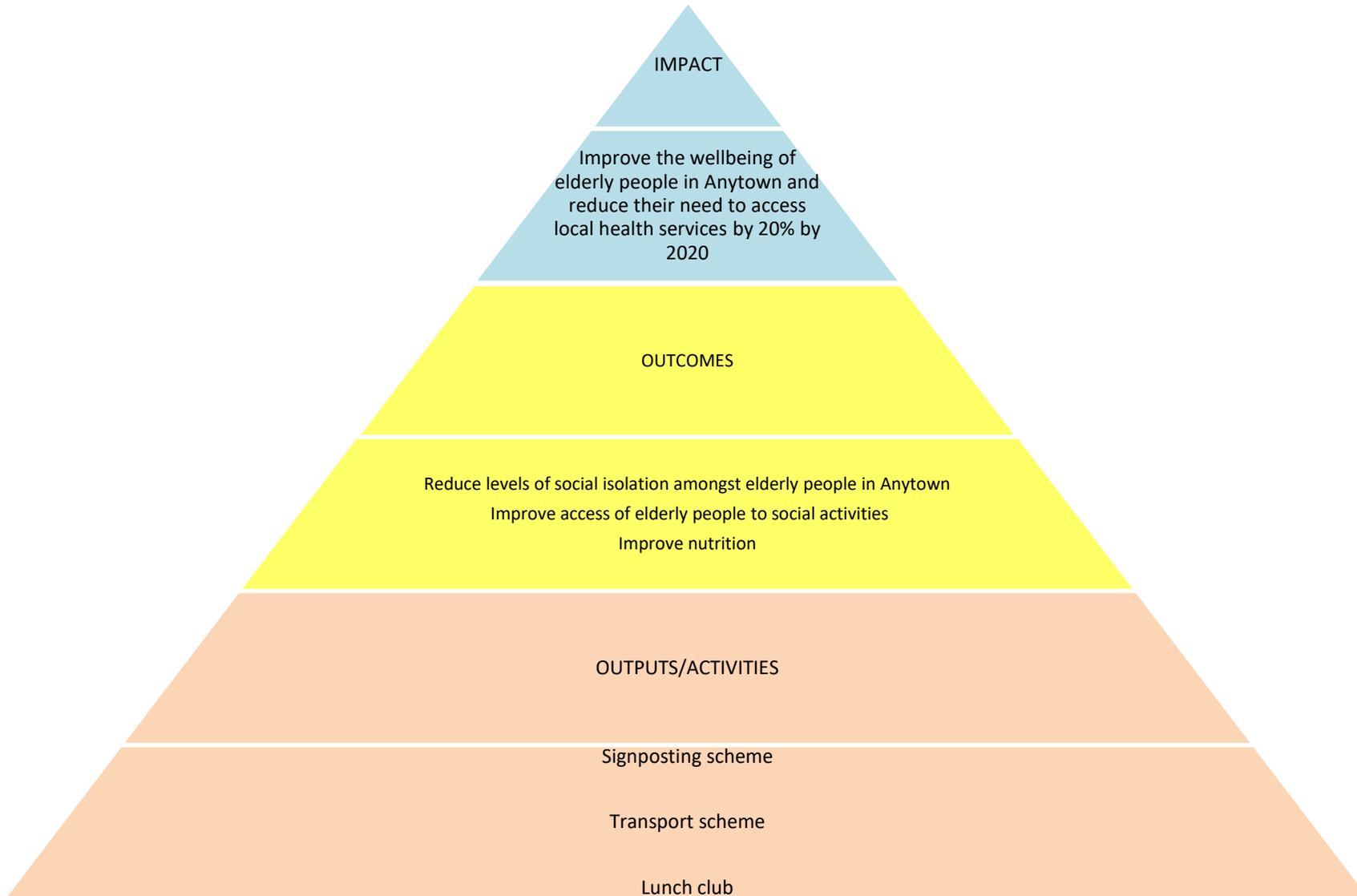(2) The Logic Model
(3) The Theory of Change.

Take a look at each model.

Each has a different method for assessing outcomes and impact.

Be sure to choose the right one to fit your circumstances and meet the needs of your project or service.

Remember: If you need advice or assistance contact info@supportcambridgeshire.org.uk

The CES Planning Model: Each activity should feed into an outcome and all the outcomes should relate to the Impact.

IMPACT

Improve the wellbeing of elderly people in Anytown and reduce their need to access local health services by 20% by 2020

OUTCOMES

Reduce levels of social isolation amongst elderly people in Anytown

Improve access of elderly people to social activities

Improve nutrition

OUTPUTS/ACTIVITIES

Signposting scheme

Transport scheme

Lunch club

The Logic Model:

Situation	Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes		Impact
The socially isolation and resulting loneliness of the growing elderly population in Any-town is impacting on elderly people's wellbeing and putting pressure on local health provision	• Volunteers from local advice charity • Community worker • Community minibus charity volunteers • Volunteers from local church cafe	activities	participants	Short term	Medium term	Improve the wellbeing of elderly people in Any-town and reduce their need to access local health services by 20% by 2020
		Signposting scheme Transport scheme	All	Increase access of elderly people to social activities	Reduce levels of social isolation amongst elderly people in Any-town	
		Lunch club	Referred by health professionals	Improve nutrition		

Problem

The social isolation and resulting loneliness of the growing elderly population of Anytown is effecting elderly people's wellbeing and putting pressure on local health provision

Evidence

Evidence of need

Available resources

Fit with mission

Other providers

Gaps In provision

Desk research demonstrates links between loneliness, poor nutrition and negative effect on wellbeing

Stakeholders

Elderly people in Anytown who ID themselves as lonely or are referred by agencies

Volunteers from local advice charity

Community worker

Community minibus charity volunteers

Local church café volunteers

Funders

Entry point

Self referrals – people contact the scheme by phone/letter in response to a leaflet drop to homes, local GP and post office and article in parish magazine

Referrals from agencies

Enabler internal

Volunteers have necessary skills & knowledge to signpost/organise transport/run lunch club

Support provided is of a high standard

Enabler external

Able to meet regulations

Gain support from agencies

Gain community support

Outputs

Signposting scheme

Transport scheme

Lunch Club

Output indicators

Nos visited by signposting volunteers

Nos of journeys made

No attending lunch club

Assumptions

Once aware elderly people will participate in schemes

Transport will be suitably adapted and available when required

Suitable social are available

Signposting: direct benefit leads to increased awareness
Indirect benefit from volunteer visit
Transport leads to improved access to activities
Lunch club: Direct benefit leads to improved nutrition
Indirect benefit from social interaction

Causal links

Outcomes

Reduce levels of social isolation/loneliness amongst elderly people

Improve nutrition

Improve elderly people's access to social activities

Reduced social isolation means less loneliness and improvements in wellbeing

Causal links

Outcome indicator

Older people:

know what activities are available

know how to access activities

attend activities

Theory of Change Model

Line of accountability

Impact

Improve the wellbeing of elderly people in Anytown and reduce their need to access local health services by 20% by 2020

Impact indicators

Elderly people are engaged with social activities

Elderly people feel less socially isolated

20% fewer visits to healthcare providers by 2020 as a result of improved

Assumptions

Improved wellbeing will reduce need to access local health services

Might result in fewer health professional home visits but more

Collecting information for evidence:

You also need to think about how you are going to collect evidence or information to prove or demonstrate the difference that you make.

You need to think about this at the earliest possible stage.

Here is an example of how this might/could work and is adapted from the NCVO Charities Evaluation Service.

	Outcome indicators	Information collection method	When and by whom	How to report and use
Older people in the community have better access to social activities	- **Older people know what activities there are** - **Older people know how to access the activities** - **Older people attend the activities**	**One to one interviews** **Register of attendance at activities**	**Community worker at beginning and end of project**	**Evaluated by designated trustee** **Key findings published in annual report and used in grant monitoring**

Outputs	Output indicators	Information collection method	When and by whom	How to report and use
Lunch club	• **Nos attending lunch club** • **Nos referred to lunch club**	**Register of attendance**	**Lunch club supervisor**	**Evaluated by designated trustee** **Key findings published in annual report and used in grant monitoring**

And finally, here are some top tips to think about..!!

- You can make Social Impact measurement as detailed or as simple as you want.
- Attempting some form of planning tool to measure social impact stands you in good stead with funders and potential donors.
- Involve as many people as you can within your organisation. Impact Measurement or demonstrating the difference you make is almost always more effective when competing ideas are brought to the table.
- If you are just starting to think about impact, give Measuring Up a try http://inspiringimpact.org/measuringup/
- For information on creating a CES planning triangle https://knowhownonprofit.org/how-to/@@search?search=create+a+planning+triangle
- For more information on creating a logic model
  http://www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/media/uploads/resources/supportguide1.2logicmodelsjul09.pdf
- For more information on how to build a theory of change https://knowhownonprofit.org/how-to/@@search?search=build+a+theory+of+change
- You might also find this you-tube video produced by DIY Toolkit helpful https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zRre_gB6A4
- If you need help and advice on demonstrating your difference contact info@supportcambridgeshire.org.uk.
- Visit our Impact page https://www.supportcambridgeshire.org.uk/social-impact/

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