

How-to Guide

This guide offers more detailed information and advice for those who may be interested in adopting or adapting the initiative in their local area.

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Tackling Poverty Locally Online Directory

Community-led Service Design - wrap around support for local Dumfries and Galloway families.



Title	Community-led Service Design.
Lead Organisation	Dumfries and Galloway Council.
All Organisations	Apex. Creative Stranraer. Dumfries and Galloway College. Galloway Action Team. Dumfries & Galloway Council. Stranraer Development Trust (project 1). Kirkconnel and Kelloholm Development Trust (project 2).
Category	Fully Validated and Effective.
Poverty Impact	Enabling Reduction. Mitigating. Improving Service Delivery. Enhancing Understanding.
Introduction to the Project	
The community-led service design project operates within a Scotland-wide programme to improve parental employability. Originating in Stranraer, it now connects three Hubs across Stranraer, Kirkconnel and Kelloholm through a shared grassroots approach. Staff, volunteers, parents and local partners use lived experience to identify barriers, including limited transport, health and social care needs, and a lack of shared spaces—and co-design accessible, face-to-face employability support. While following a common organisational model, each Hub adapts its services to local community identified needs.	

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Initial Idea

Who had the initial idea?	The Service Manager Lynne Burgess. Leona Seaton; Employability team leader.	
How did the idea for the project come about?		
The idea for the project was based on the 20-minute neighborhood concept, testing how employability services can be developed with parents and families in local areas to address poverty and improve employment outcomes. The project adopts a joined-up partnership approach involving local organisations, such as NHS speech and language services and Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), bringing services back into communities. The approach is local needs led based on and what communities want, rather than organisational targets.		
Were plans informed by any published reports / papers / research evidence or practice from elsewhere?	Yes	
Plans were informed by the Services Design Academy, the Scottish Government 'No One Left Behind', 'Best Start Bright Futures' policies, and developing work on Community Wealth Building.		
Was anyone else involved in developing the initial idea of the project?	Yes	
Dumfries and Galloway Local Employability and Skills Partnership (D&GLEP).		
Were those with lived experience of poverty involved in developing the initial idea of the project?	No	

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Was funding required to support the development of the initial idea of the project?		Yes
How was the project funded?	The same funding was used to develop the idea, pilot the project, and then implement it.	
Which organisation provided funding?	The Scottish Government. Dumfries and Galloway Council.	
How much was required?	No One Left Behind Child Poverty Employability funding.	
What was the specific source of funding?	£20,000 for initial service design and community consultation in Stranraer. This separate funding was secured to develop the idea and support community consultation. £100,000 Innovation Fund was used to pilot the delivery which was informed through community consultations.	
Were specific resources – other than funding - needed when developing the initial idea of the project?		Yes
Staff/Volunteer Time	- People within both communities, including community members, key workers and volunteers, were trained as community consultants through the Service Design Academy, with accredited learning covering community knowledge, community action, project design, implementation and ethics. - Staff time was provided by Dumfries and Galloway Council and other local organisations and supported the Projects' community Hubs.	
Facilities / Workspace	Local and accessible facilities were required for service delivery.	

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Equipment	Laptops and stationery were provided - QR codes were also used as part of a consultation engagement method.		
Local Knowledge	Knowledge was needed from previous consultations. Kirkconnel and Kelloholm were developed after the successful community consultation in Stranraer. The learning from Stranraer was specifically around recruiting more local community members to be trained to carry out the community consultation. There was a co-design day in both areas where the community were invited to co-design potential solutions to sustainable employment avenues.		
Food and Drink	Food and drink was provided through the council.		
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Did any barriers have to be overcome when developing the initial idea of the project?</td><td>Yes</td></tr> </table>		Did any barriers have to be overcome when developing the initial idea of the project?	Yes
Did any barriers have to be overcome when developing the initial idea of the project?	Yes		
• Time and skills - Limited time made it difficult to develop and deliver the project initially. • Community understanding: Many community members did not fully understand what the project was trying to achieve. • Lack of confidence in being heard: Some participants were unsure that their input would be valued or listened to. • Lack of trust: in Council staff: Stranraer council staff did not have the trust of local clients. Reasons for this included a lack of client confidence as described above, but also previous poor experiences with past council engagement. This influenced the project design which utilised community members to gain the trust of clients through established familiarisation with community members. • Childcare Barriers - Parents needed childcare support to attend sessions. • Accessibility and Scheduling - Finding suitable times that worked for parents was challenging.			

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Did anything in particular enable development of the initial idea of the project?		Yes
- Local organisations had established trusted relationships with families in the area. This helped to encourage client participation in the project. - Partner organisations directly supported some parents to attend sessions, especially those who lacked confidence. This helped to overcome barriers and increase involvement within the project.		
How long did it take between having the initial idea and starting the project?		7 Months - Funding from the Scottish Government was provided on April 1st, 2023 and the project took off in November.
Who made the decision to introduce the project?		Lynne Burgess, Employability, Skills and Partnerships Manager, and Dumfries and Galloway Local Employability and Skills Partnership.

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Early Development

Was there a pilot project or feasibility study or test of change?	Yes
What did the Test of Change. involve?	
The test of change occurred in Stranraer and involved the development of a community Hub. This was designed to provide families with a local community and non-judgmental space in which families and community members could come together. This facilitated co-design sessions led by both staff and residents and included helping families affected by disability. The project also commissioned a local partner organisation to provide whole-family support around disability. This led to the creation of an earlier 'in-between' stage of support to better prepare families for progression into employment. This allowed the project to meet the parents' micro needs rather than organisational macro goals, through a wraparound support approach.	
Who was responsible for the Test of Change.?	
Dumfries and Galloway Council's Employability Skills & Partnership team.	
Were those with lived experience of poverty among those involved in the design or delivery?	Yes
Community Consultants - These were people employed within the local community and trained through the Service Design.	
Was funding required to support the Test of Change?	N/A

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Were specific resources – other than funding - needed for the Test of Change.?		Yes
Staff/Volunteer Time	- Community consultants were recruited to carry out engagement with parents. - Support was provided by partners including Dumfries and Galloway, as well as the Service Design Academy. - All consultations were designed around the local communities identified needs.	
Facilities / Workspace	Community settings such as leisure centers, soft play, parks and school environments.	
Equipment	Laptops were provided if required for accredited training.	
Local Knowledge	The project used Service Design methodology and learning from previous community engagement. This was a mixed group who had local knowledge and/or an interest in supporting families.	
Food and Drink	Food and refreshments were provided through the council.	
Was the Test of Change. evaluated?		Yes
Individual evaluations were conducted by Hub staff alongside an overall evaluation of the pilot project which was done by Dumfries and Galloway Local Employability and Skills Partnership, and the Service Design Academy. In addition, specific evaluations were carried out for both the community Hub and the whole-family support elements. Evaluation reports are held internally and not published.		

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Was there evidence from the Test of Change that confirmed that it was working / it would work?	Yes
- Increased engagement - More people attending and using the Hub. - Footfall data - Tracking how many people visited the services. - Referral numbers – There was a general increase in referrals into employability support. - Social impact - Positive outcomes that were harder to measure quantitatively. Participants reported being listened to and empowered, with one parent stating they “really enjoyed helping to find solutions rather than just talk about the problem”.	
Who made the decision to continue with the project beyond the xxx?	
The local Employability and Skills Partnership.	
Was the design of the project proper modified following the Test of Change.?	Yes
Post evaluation the project became more community focused and led, with stronger emphasis on using local people with lived experience to lead engagement and consultations. Community members were Scottish accredited trained and supported to carry out the work rather than relying on external staff. Timeframes were also expanded, and learning from the initial project was applied to future delivery of the project.	

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Accessing the Service and Engaging with Service Users

Are potential users referred to your Service?	Yes
While many potential users are formally referred to the project, it is not essential as the Hub operates as an open-access community drop-in service. Individuals can attend independently or be signposted by key workers and services. Users can access support without already having an Employability Key Worker and may be connected to further services after attending, at client request.	
Are there ways, other than referral, that are used to make potential users aware of your Service?	Yes
• Self-referral/drop in - Individuals can choose to attend without being referred and can attend if they are not yet linked to employability services. • Key Workers - A support worker may tell someone about the Hub or meet them there. • Signposting from other services - Other organisations may direct users to the Hub.	
What is the most common way through which users typically access your Service?	
Self-referral/drop in.	
Do you take steps to keep in touch / reach out to users?	Yes
• Hub assistants - Act as the first point of contact and interact with everyone who comes in. • Employment keyworker – works from the Hub. • Fair Futures Key Worker - Works from the Hub and supports ongoing engagement. • Constant face-to-face interaction with community members using the Hub.	

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Working with People with Lived Experience of Poverty

Are those with lived experience of poverty involved in <u>delivering</u> the project?	Yes
People with lived experience are involved in delivering the project as Hub assistants and volunteers. They provide support to users, act as trusted first points of contact, and help engage the community. Their local knowledge and lived experience help create a welcoming environment and encourage participation in the service.	
Are people with lived experience of poverty involved in <u>managing</u> the project or in project <u>governance</u>?	No
Are people with lived experience of poverty involved <u>in any other aspect</u> of the project?	Yes
People with lived experience of poverty are involved in the development and evaluation of the project. They provide feedback on services which helps steer decisions about the Hub and contribute to planning events and future activities.	

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Leadership, Governance and Partnership Working

Who is responsible for managing the project?	
In Stranraer the Hub is managed by the Stranraer Development Trust and the Hub assistant employed by them. Funding for the post is provided through ES&P.	
Is this the only responsibility of the person managing the project?	No
Both Development Trusts are also heavily involved in other community-led projects and activities within the local area, supporting a range of initiatives beyond the Hub.	
What proportion of the manager's overall workload is given over to this project?	
Just a small proportion of it.	
Is there a Project Steering or Advisory Group?	Yes
Who is involved?	Both Development Trusts have a Board.
How does it work?	The Board is provided information and feedback through the Hub assistants on a day-to-day basis. This helps in guiding future service delivery and monitoring of existing projects.
Are any other governance arrangements in place to review strategy and performance?	Yes
There is a chain which involves three stages of governance: • The Scottish Government provides funding to Dumfries and Galloway Local Employability Partnership (LEP). • A governance arrangement exists between Dumfries and Galloway Council and The Local Employability Partnership. • A further Governance exists between Dumfries and Galloway Council and lead community bodies. • Scottish government officials visit the Hub with reports submitted quarterly by the Hub manager.	

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Links to Wider Policies, Strategies and Statutory Requirements

To the best of your knowledge, is the project aligned with national and/or local anti-poverty strategies and priorities (e.g., local authority or health board priorities)?	Yes
The project directly tackles poverty and inequality by feeding into community planning partnership priorities and supporting local child poverty action plan deliveries. The work focuses on areas identified as needing improvement and targeted support. Strategies and Priorities: • Dumfries and Galloway's Poverty and Inequalities strategy 2021-2026. • Dumfries and Galloway's Child Poverty Action Plan 2022-2026. • Local Outcomes Improvement Plan. • Bringing Hope, Building Futures, Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2026-2031. • Dumfries and Galloway's Local Employability Partnership Delivery Plan 2022-2027.	
In your opinion, has the project benefitted from being part of this anti-poverty strategy?	Yes
The project has benefitted through increased support, improved access to funding, senior leadership buy-in and stronger links with other services. Alignment with the tackling poverty and inequalities strategy has also helped to inform further initiatives and foster collaborative working.	
Is the project part of any other strategy?	Yes
The project may also be recognised as a place-based strategy, as the approach ensures funding is based on community need rather than applying the same model everywhere.	
In your opinion, has the project benefitted from being part of this anti-poverty strategy?	Yes
The strategy supports community specific solutions as it allows flexible use of funding based on local needs as well as improves coordination of existing community resources. Overall, it strengthens communities' involvement and ownership.	
Is the project delivering a service that is a statutory commitment?	No

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Funding

Is funding used to support the work?		Yes
If no funding was used, would work benefit from funding?		N/A
Has external funding been secured to support the work?		Yes
Which organisation provided funding?	Scottish Government No One Left Behind via the Dumfries and Galloway local employability partnership. Stranraer, and Scottish Government via Investing in Communities – Kirkconnel and Kelloholm.	
What was the specific funding stream/source/scheme?	'No One Left Behind', Investing in Communities.	
How much funding was secured?	Approximately £16,000 from each.	
For how long has funding been secured?	March, 2027 for both Hubs.	
Is future funding from the same external source a possibility?		Yes
Which organisations might provide funding?	• Scottish Government Funding No One Left Behind funding. • Wind Farm community benefit funding. • Third sector funding organisations. • Development Trust funding schemes. • Council linked funding. • Scottish Government Investing in Communities (and its successor).	

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Is future funding dependent on achieving pre-agreed outcomes or outputs?		Yes
What are these conditions?	Future funding depends on achieving agreed outcomes. Performance is monitored, and if targets are not met, funding from sources such as the Scottish Government may not continue or are reduced.	
Has a specific sum been secured from your organisation to support this work?		No
Is future funding from your organisation a possibility?		Yes
Is future funding dependent on achieving pre-agreed outcomes or outputs?		Not applicable as both Hubs are now self-sustaining.
What are these conditions?	Future funding may be applied for through Dumfries and Galloway Local area funds as well as through government initiatives such as, 'No One Left Behind'.	
What are the future - longer-term - prospects for this work if existing funding sources were no longer available?		
Without funds (self-sustaining or otherwise) the project wouldn't be able to continue.		

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Staffing and Resources

Do existing staff from your organisation contribute toward the work of this project?	Yes
Role: • They support the delivery of the project, and there is a Child Poverty Officer who supports both Hubs. There are also strong links between Kirkconnell and Kelloholm Development Trust and the Fairer Futures Partnership (SG funded). • Lifelong learning has supported work in both Hubs. • External to the council, the Hubs are supported by NHS Dumfries and Galloway.	
Are existing staff from the host organisation paid extra (for example, taking on extra hours) to contribute toward the work of this project?	No
Extra hours worked: Kelsey and heather were employed as Hub assistants. As part of their job remit, they cover staff holidays etc. but no extra hours are worked outside of their contracted hours.	
Have additional paid staff been employed to contribute toward the work of this project?	Yes
Role: Hub Assistant – present in both Hubs.	
Is the post permanent or fixed term?	Fixed term.
Duration: Funding is annual, so posts are funded April-March yearly with funding dependent on annual, external funding allocations.	
Are volunteers involved in delivering the project??	Yes
Role: Volunteers are involved in delivering the project. In Kelloholm, funding was secured for an employability café on a weekly basis with volunteers receiving training and development opportunities. Volunteers include local high school pupils, particularly school-leavers and non-attenders, who are supported to build skills and gain experience. Their role involves assisting with day-to-day running of the café, engaging with customers and developing employability skills alongside paid staff. The initiative began with 2-3 volunteers and has since expanded to 12.	
Are specific resources – other than staff/volunteer time and money - needed to support the delivery of the project?	Yes

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Facilities / Workspace	Community venues were required for engagement such as the Hub. The Kirkconnel and Kelloholm work used Hillview Leisure Centre for community engagement and the Family Fun and Information day.
Equipment	Laptops are provided to facilitate training sessions if required.
Local Knowledge	Scottish Approach to Service Design methodologies and training were required to support the delivery of the projects. Community consultants also received training to develop skills for carrying out consultations and analysing insights.
Food and Drink	Tea and coffee is provided – as well as food for community events organised as part of engagement activities.
Are any of the resources needed to deliver the project provided in-kind, rather than budgeted from project funds?	No
Who provides:	
Were new IT systems, additional software, or upgrades existing software (databases, Apps) required to deliver this project?	No
Was additional training – for staff or volunteers - required to deliver this project?	Yes
- Both Hub assistants were included in Employability and Community Led work, and additional support was available through third sector training. - Participating staff and Community consultants received certificates from the Service Design Academy after training.	

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Monitoring and Evaluation

Do you – or other organisations - collect data on the project for monitoring or evaluation purposes?	Yes
Is there baseline data to describe what things were like before the start of the project?	No
Is the difference that the project is making measured or monitored by the host organisation?	Yes
Who within the host organisation is responsible for monitoring the impact of the project	This is done by the organisation's managing the Hubs and is fed into the ES&P service
How often is the impact of the project monitored or measured by the host organisation	Quarterly monitoring.
What methods, techniques or strategies are used by the host organisation to impact of the project	Written reports which include photographs, data, and feedback from service users.
What information is collected by the host organisation about the project?	

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Number of users	Withing the Stranraer HUB, to date, 1,417 people have accessed the service, including parents, registered employability clients, key workers, external agencies, children and walk-ins. In Kirkconnell and Kelloholm, to date, 1,927 people have accessed the service, including parents, registered employability clients, key workers, external agencies, children and walk-ins. This also includes people coming to the Community Café.
Profile of users	No
Experience of users	Yes
Outcomes for users	Yes
Anything else	Yes
Has the data that has been collected by the host organisation been used to adapt the way the project works?	Yes
The data that has been collected is predominantly based on user feedback, which is used to improve and evolve the project so that it can better meet community's needs.	
Has an external organisation been employed to formally evaluate the project?	No
Is there an intention to employ an external organisation to evaluate the impact of the project in the future?	No
Is there an intention to undertake your own formal evaluation in the future to estimate the impact of the project?	No

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Impact

To what extent have the aims of the project been achieved?		Making progress towards meeting aims.
What difference has the project made?		
- Improved access to local services by delivering support through community Hubs. - Reduced travel barriers for people in remote small towns and rural areas. - Increased engagement with employability support within the community. - Created trusted, non-judgmental spaces for individuals experiencing poverty. - Strengthened community ownership and involvement in local services - Improved social connections as well as confidence and empowerment among users. - Developed local peoples' skills and experience through participation and volunteering - Strengthened partnerships between community organisations and services. - Access to services to improve health and wellbeing has improved. - A safe, familiar, family-friendly place within the local community has been created.		
Have conditions or demand changed since the project was introduced?		Yes
There is constant change within the project in response to constant change within the social environment, including the cost-of-living crisis, increases in energy prices, fuel costs, and changes in Government policies.		
Has the project had the capacity to meet these changing conditions and demand?		Yes
There is flexibility within the budget for the local communities so they can identify what the changing needs are, and what support can be brought in to meet them.		
Has the project changed through time?		Yes
What changed	The way the Hubs are used has changed and evolved. One has become more community-focused, while the other remains more employability-led. The space is now used more flexibility and effectively, with increased activity and improved interaction with the community.	

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Why has it changed	The Hubs have changed over time to best meet demand and the needs of people. As the Hubs are community led, they are better able to respond and evolve.	
Has the project had any unexpected or unintended outcomes?		Yes
- Increased use, and security of funding allocation for the building from which Kirkconnel and Kelloholm HUB operate from. The venue is a council-operated leisure Centre, which had limited opening hours and has twice been at risk of closure due to council budgetary restraints. - A renewed sense of community ownership of space. - The community has become more empowered and connected to their local facilities.		
In your opinion, is the project having an impact on tackling poverty?		Yes
The project is tackling poverty by improving access to services, reducing barriers, strengthening community connections, and building confidence and skills that support progression into employment.		

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Learning from Experience

What is working well?

- The community-led approach is effective and valued.
- Improved access to services within local communities.
- Strong community-led engagement and participation.
- Increased confidence and empowerment among residents.
- The Hubs provide trusted, non-judgmental spaces.
- Flexible use of buildings to meet changing needs.
- Partnership working between multiple services.
- Opportunities for volunteering, learning and support.
- Progression towards employability outcomes.
- Tailored support based on local community needs.

What, if anything, is working less well?

- Limited space in the Stranraer Hub which is smaller. This restricts how much activity can take place and limits growth.
- Short-term funding arrangements - year by year - make long-term planning difficult.
- Uncertainty about future funding - creates anxiety and can prevent partners from planning ahead.
- Need for continued support for community organisations. Development Trusts require ongoing support to sustain delivery.
- Complex paperwork and governance process can be time-consuming and challenging for smaller third-sector groups.

What are the key learning points that you'd like to share with other practitioners?

- Use local community members to gather insights – responses were more honest and open when research was carried out by local people known in the community.
- Use multiple engagement methods to reach people.
- Community-led co-design leads to a shared solution – after analysing insights, community members were invited to co-design solution.
- Recruiting community consultants can be challenging – time therefore needs to be factored in to support the recruitment process and build community relationships.

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Are there plans to develop or expand the project in the future?	Yes
The project may expand if funding is provided for these areas through external organisations. Funding would be used to expand the services which are provided within these areas to reach more individuals.	
How easily do you think this project could be replicated in another setting?	
This project could be replicated in other settings as staff have been trained in community-led service design. The knowledge gained from this approach could be applied elsewhere. While the specific activities and outcomes would differ depending on local needs, the overall approach is considered feasible, transferable, and potentially more cost-effective to deliver in the future.	

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