

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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Working for Wallacetown



Title	Working for Wallacetown.
Organisation	South Ayrshire council
Category	Promising Local Practice.
Poverty Impact	Prevention., Mitigation., Awareness Raising.
<p>Working for Wallacetown is a community-based, multi-agency initiative focused on addressing entrenched poverty and its interconnected challenges, such as health inequalities and community safety issues. Wallacetown is a socioeconomically disadvantaged neighbourhood in Ayr, South Ayrshire.</p> <p>This project was initiated in response to urgent concerns raised by Newton Primary School regarding the well-being of its pupils and families. It brings together statutory services and third-sector partners to collaboratively tackle the root causes of poverty as well as the lived experiences of those affected.</p> <p>By prioritising sustained, face-to-face engagement, the initiative embeds holistic support directly within the community. This approach ensures accessible and coordinated responses that reflect the priorities of local residents, ultimately promoting long-term social and economic inclusion.</p>	

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Initial Idea

Who had the initial idea?	
The initial idea emerged from Newton Primary School, whose staff raised serious concerns about community conditions impacting children.	
How did the idea for the project come about?	
Concerns around safety, drug use, and social neglect were brought to attention by school staff, leading to the involvement of local services and community planning partners. These stakeholders recognised the need for a coordinated, long-term approach to tackle these problems.	
Were plans informed by any published reports / papers / research evidence or practice from elsewhere?	
No	
Yes	✓
<p>The Christie Commission Report (2011): Emphasizing community empowerment, early intervention, and integrated service delivery.</p> <p>The Scottish Violence Reduction Unit (VRU): Applying a public health model to address the root causes of crime and social harm.</p> <p>Community voice played a formative role. A local survey (2021) identified priority concerns. Safety, drugs, antisocial behaviour, crime, and dog fouling, which were directly incorporated into the project's action plan.</p>	

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Was anyone else involved in developing the initial idea of the project?	
No	
Yes	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Ayrshire council community planning team • Housing services • Police Scotland • Scottish Government's COVID Recovery Objectives • South Ayrshire’s Child Poverty Strategy • Community Empowerment Act 2015 • Scotland’s Public Health Priorities • Locality Improvement Plans (LOIP) 	
Were those with lived experience of poverty involved in developing the initial idea of the project?	
No	
Yes	✓
<p>The project is overseen by the South Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership. Key decision-makers include Assistant Director Kevin Anderson. Residents are increasingly involved via structured feedback mechanisms, although formal governance inclusion remains a developmental goal.</p> <p>With the establishment of the Integrated Neighbourhood Team for Ayr North, the Wallacetown model is now being replicated in neighbouring areas (Dalmilling, Lochside, and Whitletts), with additional NHS and Social Care involvement. Four new strategic focuses. Homelessness, family poverty, early years support, and substance use. Ensure continued relevance and expansion.</p>	

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Was funding required to support the development of the initial idea of the project?			
No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please provide details of the funding that was used to support the development of the initial idea of the project.			
Which organisation provided funding?	South Ayrshire Council (with COVID recovery funds).		
How much was required?	Not specified.		
What was the specific source of funding?	COVID Recovery Funding (Scottish Government stream).		
Were specific resources – other than funding - needed when developing the initial idea of the project?			
No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please provide details of the resources that were required when developing the initial idea of the project. If not needed, please add N/A			
Staff/Volunteer Time	Significant time was invested by both council officers and school staff during the initial development phase. This included planning meetings, community engagement efforts, and logistical coordination. Their input was essential in aligning the project’s goals with the needs of the local area. Volunteers also played a key role in early outreach and helped build trust within the community.		
Facilities / Workspace	The project made use of existing community spaces, such as local halls and school buildings, which provided accessible, familiar venues for meetings, service delivery, and public engagement. Utilising these spaces helped reduce setup costs and ensured that the project was embedded in the heart of the community.		

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<p>Equipment</p>	<p>Basic but important materials such as printed leaflets, surveys, and awareness/prevention materials were necessary to inform residents about the project, gather feedback, and promote services. These tools were crucial in the early stages to build visibility and assess local needs effectively.</p>
<p>Local Knowledge</p>	<p>Local insight, gathered through conversations with residents, frontline workers, and community leaders, was fundamental in shaping the direction of the project. This knowledge helped identify key priorities such as food insecurity, housing concerns, and feelings of social isolation, ensuring the project was rooted in lived experience and genuine need.</p>
<p>Food and Drink</p>	<p>Food was a vital resource, particularly in establishing a foodbank service to provide immediate relief for families in financial crisis. Additionally, food and refreshments were occasionally used during community events and outreach sessions to encourage attendance, create a welcoming atmosphere, and foster informal conversations that built trust and rapport.</p>
<p>Did any barriers have to be overcome when developing the initial idea of the project?</p>	
<p>No</p>	<p></p>
<p>Yes</p>	<p>✓</p>
<p>Initial leadership gaps and service fragmentation. Community distrust due to the short lifespan of previous initiatives. High levels of digital exclusion.</p>	

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Did anything in particular enable development of the initial idea of the project?	
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High credibility and embeddedness of Newton Primary School. • Committed local volunteers and community faith organisations. • A deeply relational approach. Doorstep conversations remain the most effective engagement tool. • Strong partners buy-in and co-location of services. 	
What, if anything, helped enable development of the initial idea of the project?	
Nothing in particular.	
How long did it take between having the initial idea and starting the project?	
Approximately 6–12 months (from concern-raising to coordinated action).	
Who made the decision to introduce the project?	
<p>The decision to introduce the project was made jointly by South Ayrshire Council’s Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and a range of associated public service stakeholders. This included representatives from local authority departments, health services, education, police, and third-sector organisations. The decision stemmed from a shared recognition of the urgent and complex challenges facing the Wallacetown area, particularly in relation to poverty, social exclusion, and community safety.</p> <p>Through consultation, data analysis, and direct engagement with the community, the CPP identified the need for a coordinated, place-based approach. The collaborative nature of the decision-making process ensured that the project would be well-aligned with both strategic objectives and local needs. The project was developed not as a top-down intervention, but as a partnership-driven initiative, with strong commitment across sectors to work together for long-term, sustainable change in Wallacetown.</p>	

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Early Development – Pilot Project or Feasibility Study

Was there a pilot project or feasibility study?	
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Yes, a pilot project	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes, a feasibility study	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Accessing the Service and Engaging with Service Users

Is there a referral process?	
No	✓
Yes	
Other than referral, how do potential clients come to know about the project?	
<p>Days of Action: Weekly multi-agency door-knocking campaigns to build trust and refer residents to appropriate support (housing, health, income maximisation).</p> <p>Casework and Referrals: From July 2023 to April 2024, the project recorded 1,114 active enquiries and made 1,113 service referrals, with an average of 124 per month.</p> <p>Embedded Access Points: Two community hubs (Wallacetown Hub and Newton Primary) offer services including benefits advice, employability, child/family support, and mental health referrals.</p> <p>Community-Led Engagement: Feedback from residents, schoolchildren (via the “Prevention First” box), and sheltered housing tenant's shapes interventions in real-time.</p> <p>Resident Outcomes: 87% of surveyed residents reported financial benefits, and 74% reported feeling safer at home.</p>	
What is the most common way through which users typically access the service?	
Face-to-face engagement with on-the-ground teams during outreach activities or through community events.	

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Do you take steps to keep in touch / reach out to service users?	
No	
Yes	✓
<p>As part of its commitment to embedding the voices of residents into service delivery, Working for Wallacetown has introduced physical feedback boxes in sheltered housing complexes. These boxes allow older or less digitally engaged residents to anonymously or directly report concerns, highlight needs, or suggest community improvements. Submissions are regularly reviewed by the community coordination team, with urgent cases acted upon immediately. This initiative supports continuous, low-barrier communication and recognises that residents may prefer non-verbal or written channels of engagement.</p> <p>In partnership with Newton Primary School, “Prevention First” boxes have been placed in classrooms to allow children to safely and confidentially report issues affecting them or their families. These boxes are reviewed by trusted school staff and shared with community partners where appropriate. Reports have included issues such as bullying, drug use, domestic instability, or unsafe public spaces. This approach empowers young people as active agents in community safety and has led to targeted youth work interventions and safeguarding support.</p> <p>A central feature of the project is regular, face-to-face engagement by core partners, particularly Police Scotland, South Ayrshire Council (Housing and Community Safety), and local third-sector organisations. Weekly multi-agency briefings are held to coordinate follow-up visits, identify households of concern (e.g., new tenancies, reports of antisocial behaviour), and deliver doorstep outreach. These engagements not only offer a route for direct service referrals but also create trusted relationships that encourage ongoing resident feedback.</p> <p>The Wallacetown Hub, located centrally in the community, operates scheduled walk-in times throughout the week. During these sessions, residents can access a range of services without appointments. Including income maximisation support, employability services, housing assistance, and health referrals. Staffed by a rotation of partner agencies, these open sessions also provide an informal space for residents to raise concerns or share feedback in person. The hub model ensures accessibility and helps build the habit of regular engagement with services in a supportive, non-institutional environment.</p>	

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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?	
No	✓
Yes	
Are people with lived experience of poverty involved in <u>managing</u> the project or project governance?	
No	✓
Yes	
No (not currently), however, a new Wallacetown Assistant role has been created to enhance resident involvement in coordination.	
Are people with lived experience of poverty involved <u>in any other aspect</u> of the project? If so, please describe below.	
No	
Yes	✓
<p>People with lived experience of poverty play a central, though primarily informal, role in shaping the delivery and ongoing development of the Working for Wallacetown project. In 2021, a community-wide survey was conducted, post-COVID lockdowns. Which captured the voices of residents across Wallacetown and directly informed the project's strategic priorities. The top concerns identified included safety in the home, drug misuse, antisocial behaviour, crime, and environmental neglect (e.g., dog fouling). These priorities continue to guide the workstreams and focus areas of partner organisations.</p> <p>Beyond formal surveys, everyday engagement mechanisms ensure lived experience remains at the heart of service planning. Regular doorstep conversations, conducted during Days of Action, provide opportunities for residents to share concerns, suggest improvements, and access support. School-based engagement through Newton Primary has been a vital source of insight into the experiences of families living in poverty, including the use of “Prevention First” boxes where pupils anonymously report community issues.</p> <p>Additionally, the team receives ongoing feedback via: Housing officer visits., Engagement with vulnerable residents and new tenants., Resident suggestions during walk-in sessions at the Wallacetown Hub, and comments submitted through sheltered housing “feedback boxes”. While residents are not yet part of formal governance structures, their voices are embedded into the operational model, influencing both case-level interventions and broader service design.</p>	

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Leadership, Governance and Partnership Working

Who is responsible for managing the project?		
The project is managed by the CO- Ordinator at Wallacetown Community Hub.		
Is this the only responsibility of the person managing the project?		
	Yes	
	No	✓
<p>The individual managing Working for Wallacetown holds a broader portfolio of responsibilities within South Ayrshire Council's Community Planning and Safety Partnership. In addition to coordinating the Wallacetown initiative, the project manager plays a key role in the development and delivery of other community-based programmes that operate through the Wallacetown Hub and affiliated spaces. These include overseeing local food distribution efforts, supporting the organisation and facilitation of community events, and contributing to a range of wellbeing-focused initiatives designed to promote social inclusion, reduce isolation, and address health inequalities.</p> <p>Furthermore, the manager is actively involved in partnership development across South Ayrshire, working to sustain and strengthen inter-agency collaboration. This involves coordinating with third-sector organisations, local schools, health services, and housing teams to ensure a coherent and responsive approach to addressing poverty and community safety. The role also encompasses elements of strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring project outcomes across multiple initiatives within the locality.</p>		
What proportion of the manager's overall workload is given over to this project?		
	Most of it	
	About half of it	✓
	Just a small proportion of it	

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Is there a Project Steering or Advisory Group?	
No	
Yes	✓
<p>A local project steering group is in place to provide strategic oversight and ensure that Working for Wallacetown remains aligned with the evolving needs of the community. This group brings together key stakeholders, including representatives from South Ayrshire Council (across community planning, housing, and community safety departments), the WallaceTown Community Hub, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), NHS Ayrshire and Arran, and several local third-sector organisations.</p> <p>The steering group functions as a collaborative governance body, meeting regularly to review progress, monitor emerging issues, and guide project direction. It plays a vital role in coordinating referrals, integrating service delivery across sectors, and ensuring that local interventions reflect both policy priorities and the lived experience of residents. Through shared decision-making and ongoing dialogue, the group fosters a joined-up approach to tackling poverty, enhancing wellbeing, and promoting long-term resilience in Wallacetown.</p>	
Are any other governance arrangements in place to review strategy and performance?	
No	
Yes	✓
<p>In addition to the project steering group, Working for Wallacetown is supported by a range of governance arrangements designed to review strategy, monitor performance, and ensure accountability. Regular operational meetings are held with core staff and partner agencies, where case activity, resident feedback, and emerging challenges are discussed. These meetings serve as a forum for adapting practice in response to frontline learning and community needs.</p> <p>Strategic oversight is further supported through reporting mechanisms to the WallaceTown Hub’s board of trustees, who receive updates on project developments, outcomes, and financial performance. Feedback is also actively collected from residents, both informally during engagement activities and through structured tools such as community surveys and evaluation forms. In addition, frontline staff contribute insights based on their interactions with service users, helping to shape delivery in real time. Collectively, these governance processes support a continuous improvement model, ensuring that the initiative remains responsive, accountable, and aligned with its anti-poverty objectives.</p>	

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Links to Wider Policies, Strategies and Statutory Requirements

In your opinion, is the project aligned with national and/or local anti-poverty strategies and priorities?	
Don't know	
No	
Yes	✓
<p>Working for Wallacetown is closely aligned with both national and local anti-poverty strategies and priorities. At the local level, the project supports South Ayrshire Council’s commitment to reducing inequality and improving life outcomes in disadvantaged communities, as outlined in the Locality Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and the Child Poverty Action Report. Its targeted, place-based model directly addresses cost-of-living challenges, enhances access to services, and promotes financial inclusion, key priorities identified in South Ayrshire’s strategic framework.</p> <p>At the national level, the project contributes to the Scottish Government’s Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan and broader public health and social justice agendas. It embodies principles from the Christie Commission by prioritising preventative, person-centred, and collaborative approaches. By embedding multi-agency support within a high-deprivation area, the project advances national goals related to poverty reduction, community empowerment, and early intervention, making it a strong example of policy implementation at the community level.</p>	

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In your opinion, has the project benefitted from being part of this anti-poverty strategy?	
Don't know	
No	
Yes	✓
<p>Being embedded within broader anti-poverty strategies has significantly strengthened the impact and operational capacity of Working for Wallacetown. Alignment with local and national policy frameworks has enhanced the project's legitimacy, enabling it to foster deeper, more sustained partnerships across sectors. This has led to increased inter-agency collaboration, a higher volume of coordinated referrals, and more streamlined access to services for residents.</p> <p>Moreover, its integration within South Ayrshire's wider cost-of-living and child poverty responses has raised the project's profile and credibility. This has facilitated stronger engagement from statutory agencies, improved access to resources, and greater responsiveness from external funders and stakeholders. The strategic context has also provided a coherent framework through which the project can monitor progress, demonstrate impact, and contribute meaningfully to the region's long-term anti-poverty goals.</p>	
Is the project part of any other strategy?	
Don't know	
No	
Yes	✓
<p>The project supports the local employability pathway by providing participants with access to skills development, training opportunities, and pathways into sustainable employment. It aligns with the area's food security strategy by enhancing access to affordable, nutritious food through community-led initiatives such as food growing, redistribution, or education on healthy eating. In addition, the project reflects community planning priorities by promoting social inclusion, reducing inequalities, and contributing to wellbeing through targeted support for marginalised groups, collaborative community engagement, and the creation of safe, supportive spaces for participation and empowerment.</p>	

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In your opinion, has the project benefitted from being part of this strategy?	
Don't know	
No	
Yes	✓
<p>Being part of the wider strategy has significantly benefitted the project by facilitating better resource sharing, including access to funding streams, staff expertise, and training opportunities. It has also strengthened partnerships, particularly with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and local employability services, enabling more coordinated referral pathways and wraparound support for participants. The strategic alignment has increased the project's visibility and credibility within the community planning framework, allowing for greater collaboration, impact measurement, and long-term sustainability.</p>	
Is the project delivering a service that is a statutory commitment?	
No	✓
Yes	

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Funding

Has external funding been secured to support the work?		
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please provide details of the external funding that was used secured to support this work?		
Which organisation provided funding?	Corra Foundation (Scottish Government).	
What was the specific funding stream/source/scheme?	Household Support Fund – Community Anchor Organisations.	
How much funding was secured?	£30,000	
For how long has funding been secured?	6 months	
Is future funding from the same external source a possibility?		
	Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Is future funding from the same external source based on pre-agreed outcomes or outputs being delivered from this work?		
	No	
	Yes	✓
<p>Funding is specifically tied to supporting financially vulnerable households, which means the project is focused on delivering practical, measurable support to individuals and families experiencing hardship. Such as those at risk of food insecurity, unemployment, or debt. This includes providing timely interventions like access to food provision, benefits advice, employability support, or financial literacy workshops. There is a strong emphasis on delivering these interventions quickly, ensuring that support reaches those in need without unnecessary delays, particularly in times of crisis or transition. In return for funding, the project is required to report on its impact through both quantitative data (e.g., number of households supported, employment outcomes, reductions in food insecurity) and qualitative evidence, such as case studies that highlight individual experiences and outcomes. These case studies help to demonstrate the real-world difference the project is making and inform future planning and investment decisions.</p>		
Has a specific sum been secured from the host organisation to support this work?		
	No	✓
	Yes	
Is future funding from the host organisation a possibility?		
	Don't know	
	No	
	Yes	✓

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Is future funding from the host organisation based on pre-agreed outcomes or outputs being delivered?

	No	✓
	Yes	

What is the future - longer-term - prospects for this work if existing funding sources were no longer available?

The Hub would need to seek alternative funding sources or scale back delivery. Without further support, the intensity and reach of interventions would likely reduce, affecting local impact during the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

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Staffing and Resources

Do existing staff from the host organisation contribute toward the work of this project as part of their broader work for the organisation?	
No	
Yes	✓
<p>Existing staff from the host organisation play a vital role in supporting the delivery of this project as part of their broader responsibilities. Hub staff contribute across multiple functions, including the coordination and distribution of food parcels, ensuring that deliveries are efficient, well-organised, and tailored to the specific needs of vulnerable households. They also carry out household visits, providing a trusted presence within the community to offer direct support, assess needs, and connect residents with additional services where appropriate. In addition, staff are involved in administrative tasks, such as maintaining accurate records, supporting monitoring and evaluation processes, and assisting with data collection for impact reporting. By integrating project activities into their existing roles, staff help ensure the project is both cost-effective and embedded within wider organisational goals related to community support, inclusion, and wellbeing.</p>	
Are existing staff from the host organisation paid extra to contribute toward the work of this project?	
No	✓
Yes	
Have additional paid staff been employed to contribute toward the work of this project?	
No	✓
Yes	

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Are volunteers involved in delivering the project?			
	No		
	Yes		✓
Volunteers help pack and deliver support parcels, collect food donations, and assist in engaging with households.			
Are specific resources – other than staff/volunteer time and money - needed to support the delivery of the project?			
	No		
		Yes	✓
Please provide details of the resources that are required to deliver the project. If not needed, please add N/A			
Facilities / Workspace	Hub office and storage rooms used for sorting/delivery.		
Equipment	Trolleys, packing materials, phones.		
Local Knowledge	Critical for targeting and engaging hard-to-reach residents.		
Food and Drink	Essential items provided to families as part of the support package.		

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Are any of the resources needed to deliver the project provided in-kind, rather than budgeted from project funds?		
	No	
	Yes	✓
<p>A range of valuable in-kind resources support the delivery of the project, helping to maximise the use of direct funding and extend the project's reach. The Hub provides workspace and utilities at no cost, including access to office space, meeting rooms, storage areas for food supplies, electricity, heating, internet, and cleaning services. This support creates a stable and fully equipped operational base for staff and volunteers.</p> <p>In addition, local suppliers and food businesses donate surplus or purpose-provided food items, including fresh produce, dry goods, and hygiene products. These donations reduce costs and ensure the project can respond flexibly to changing community needs.</p> <p>Community members also contribute their time and skills voluntarily, supporting a range of activities such as packing and delivering food parcels, administrative help, translation, outreach, and offering peer support to service users. These contributions foster strong community ownership of the project, enhance its sustainability, and help build trust and local engagement.</p> <p>Together, these in-kind contributions significantly enhance the project's impact while reducing reliance on core funding.</p>		
Were new IT systems, additional software, or upgrades existing software (databases, Apps) required to deliver this project? .		
	No	✓
	Yes	
Was additional training – for staff or volunteers - required to deliver this project?		
	No	
	Yes	✓
<p>Staff and volunteers received brief training in safeguarding, managing sensitive conversations, and data collection for reporting. Training was delivered informally in sessions at the Wallacetown Hub.</p>		

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Monitoring and Evaluation

Is there baseline data to describe what things were like before the start of the project?		
	No	
	Yes	✓
Baseline understanding came from the Hub's previous community support work, identifying high levels of financial insecurity, poor access to support, and limited engagement with mainstream services. Existing data on food parcel requests, crisis grants, and local deprivation was also used.		
Is the difference that the project is making measured or monitored by the host organisation?		
	Yes	✓
	No	
Who within the host organisation is responsible for monitoring the impact of the project?		
The Project Manager, with support from the admin and engagement team.		
How often is the impact of the project monitored or measured by the host organisation?		
Monthly, with informal weekly check-ins and updates.		
What methods, techniques or strategies are used by the host organisation to impact of the project?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies. • Feedback from users. • Tracking support provided. • Partner feedback. • Monitoring uptake of follow-on services. 		

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What information is collected by the host organisation about the project?				
Number of users	Yes	✓	No	
Profile of users	Yes	✓	No	
Experience of users	Yes	✓	No	
Outcomes for users	Yes	✓	No	
Anything else	Yes	✓	No	
Narrative case studies and notes on unmet needs/gaps.				
Has the data that has been collected by the host organisation been used to adapt the way the project works?				
			No	
			Yes	✓
<p>Data collected by the host organisation, through monitoring, feedback forms, case tracking, and direct engagement. Has played a crucial role in shaping and improving the way the project is delivered. In response to user feedback, the project introduced more flexible delivery times, recognising that many households have varying schedules due to work, caring responsibilities, or mobility issues. This change has improved accessibility and engagement, particularly among working families and individuals with limited availability.</p> <p>Additionally, seasonal data on household needs. Such as increases in living costs during winter, prompted the introduction of additional fuel top-up support to help vulnerable households manage heating costs. This targeted intervention helped prevent crisis situations and enabled more proactive support planning.</p> <p>Data has also been used to refine and strengthen referral pathways by identifying which referral sources were most effective and which populations were underrepresented. As a result, partnerships with specific agencies (such as local GPs, schools, and housing providers) have been adjusted to improve targeting and reach, ensuring support goes to those most in need. This adaptive, data-informed approach has made the project more responsive, efficient, and impactful.</p>				
Has an external organisation been employed to formally evaluate the project?				
			No	✓
			Yes	

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Is there an intention to employ an external organisation to evaluate the impact of the project in the future?	
Don't know / no current plans	✓
No	
Yes	
Is there an intention to undertake your own formal evaluation in the future to estimate the impact of the project?	
Don't know / no current plans	
No	
Yes	✓

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Impact

To what extent have the aims of the project been achieved?	
Fully met	
Making progress toward meeting Aims	✓
Not making progress	
<p>The project has built strong local partnerships, increased access to crisis support, and strengthened trust between residents and services. While long-term outcomes like financial resilience take time, short-term goals have largely been met.</p>	
What difference has the project made?	
<p>Increased early engagement with families in financial hardship Reduced isolation and stigma in seeking help Improved take-up of entitlements and advice services Built local partnerships to support wraparound care</p>	
Have conditions or demand changed since the project was introduced?	
No	
Yes	✓
<p>Since the project was introduced, there has been a significant shift in both external conditions and levels of demand, particularly linked to the intensification of cost-of-living pressures, which worsened during the winter months. Rising prices for food, fuel, and household essentials placed additional strain on financially vulnerable households, resulting in a noticeable increase in demand for food support and energy-related assistance, such as fuel vouchers and top-up cards.</p> <p>In addition to higher volumes of requests, the complexity of cases has also increased. More households are now presenting with multiple, intersecting challenges, including mental health concerns, housing instability, long-term unemployment, digital exclusion, and debt. This shift has required a more holistic, trauma-informed approach, often involving longer-term support, more intensive case management, and stronger partnerships with external agencies such as housing providers, mental health services, and debt advice organisations.</p> <p>The project has had to adapt by increasing staff and volunteer capacity, expanding referral routes, and introducing more flexible and responsive support options to meet the evolving and urgent needs of service users. These changes have underscored the importance of integrated, community-based responses to socio-economic pressures.</p>	

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Has the project had the capacity to meet these changing conditions and demand?	
Yes	✓
No	
Through flexible working, drawing on volunteer support, and adapting what is offered (e.g., delivering essentials directly, extended hours).	
Has the project changed through time?	
No	
Yes	✓
What changed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery became more proactive (doorstep visits). • Expanded support offer (fuel top-ups, crisis advocacy). • Referral processes streamlined.
Why has it changed	To respond to increased and more complex needs and based on feedback from the community and partners.
Has the project had any unexpected or unintended outcomes?	
No	
Yes	✓
Increased trust has led to disclosures of wider issues (e.g., mental health, domestic abuse), prompting referrals to other services. The project has also strengthened the Hub's reputation as a safe and trusted space.	

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In your opinion, is the project having an impact on tackling poverty?	
No	
Yes	✓
<p>The project is having a meaningful impact on tackling poverty. It offers immediate relief to individuals and families facing financial crises, such as through food provision, emergency funds, or essential services. More importantly, it goes beyond short-term aid by connecting people to longer-term support systems. Including employment services, benefits advice, housing support, and financial literacy programs. This dual approach helps address both the symptoms and root causes of poverty, empowering individuals to move toward greater financial stability and resilience and reducing the likelihood of recurring hardship.</p>	

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Learning from Experience

What is working well?

The project benefits from strong community trust in the Hub, which is vital in engaging people who may otherwise be hesitant to seek support. This trust has been built through consistent, compassionate service and a reputation for delivering practical help without judgment.

The responsive, non-judgemental delivery model is a key strength. It ensures that individuals feel safe and respected when accessing support, regardless of their background or circumstances. This approach helps reduce stigma and encourages earlier intervention, which is crucial in preventing deeper financial or personal crises.

The Hub also engages in close working with partners, including the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The UK government department responsible for welfare, pensions, and child maintenance policy. This collaboration allows for streamlined referrals and a more holistic support package for clients, integrating benefit advice, health services, housing support, and employment resources. Working alongside agencies like the DWP ensures that clients are not only receiving emergency help but are also being supported in navigating complex systems to access long-term solutions.

Finally, the Hub demonstrates flexibility to adapt based on needs and feedback. It regularly reviews its practices and services in response to community input and changing circumstances. This agility enables it to remain relevant, effective, and client-centered, key qualities in the fight against poverty.

What, if anything, is working less well?

Some service gaps remain (e.g., fuel poverty advice).

Reaching digitally excluded households can be a challenge.

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

- The value of building trust before trying to 'refer' people.
- Being flexible in delivery allows for greater impact.
- Small, local organisations can act quickly and effectively in crisis response.

Working for Wallacetown



Are there plans to develop or expand the project in the future?	
No	
Yes	✓
Plans include expanding the model to other neighbourhoods, strengthening links with health services, and seeking sustained funding for longer-term interventions.	
How easily do you think this project could be replicated in another setting?	
It could be replicated with the right trusted community anchor, committed staff, and strong local partnerships. Flexibility and local knowledge are key.	

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