

AUGUST - 2021

COMMUNITY HUBS



INFORMATION PACK

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY HUB?

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' definition for what makes a community hub, but put most holistically, they are a focal point for local activities, services and are accessible to the local community. Community hubs are multi-purpose spaces that reflect the needs of the locality. From acting as a social space to tackle isolation, hosting food banks, to providing vital services for the community, hubs offer spaces where everyone is welcome and bring the community together. They put the community, services and businesses in one place, to facilitate the connection between those in need with those who can help.

WHAT IS THE YORK APPROACH?

Hubs in York are all about connecting people together to foster community spirit and fulfil the needs of the community. Since their set up as the 4Community Growth Area-Based Financial inclusion Project (4CGY) trial, community hubs have been growing and thriving in York. They bring a number of different services, the local authority and members of the community together under one roof to serve the needs of the community. The hubs offer a range of services in key locations based on the specific needs the community have. They offer spaces for volunteers and residents to make social contact, aiming to tackle widespread isolation.



While each hub differs in its approach to serving its community, as they are tailored to the community's needs, a report by the City of York council in 2021 detailed key principles which are used in the roll out of all hubs.

PLACE

Community hubs should be set up in areas that are both safe and accessible to the community. They should be in buildings which are already at the heart of the community or have the potential to become one.

PEOPLE

The hubs should be developed in partnership with the residents of the area, volunteers, services and other stakeholders to ensure what is offered meets the needs of the community. They should encourage members of the community to get involved and be active citizens. The hubs should allow social connections to form and encourage the connecting of resources in new and productive ways.

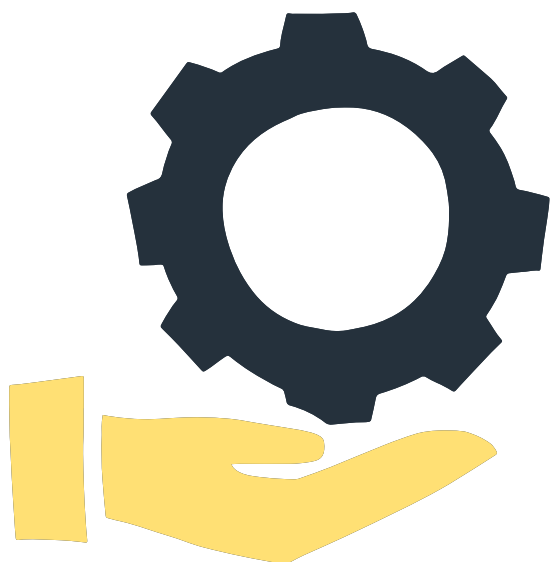
PURPOSE

The hubs should be established in response to particular local needs. For example, connecting people to financial inclusion support. The clear initial purpose will galvanise activity and motivate people to volunteer and engage.

YORK COMMUNITY HUBS: AT A GLANCE

HUB LOCATIONS

Before the COVID-19 pandemic there were a number of hubs operating around York. They worked to satiate the communities' needs, by offering a range of services. Originally being set up under the CYCs guidance and adhering to the shared community hub values; these hubs have grown to tailor their provision to best serve their communities within York.



SERVICES

The hubs offer a wide range of services which are tailored to meet the exact needs of the community. A small selection of the multitude of services which can be included in hubs are:

- Benefits advice
- Adult learning
- Art and Crafts Classes
- Health Checks
- Citizens Advice

WHY ARE HUBS SO CRUCIAL?

The hubs are created around the needs of the community, whether that is giving advice or providing food aid - they are there to serve the community. They aim to connect people in need to those who will be able to help them, whether they be services, volunteers or even just the friendly face of another member of the community. Bringing members of the community together both tackles loneliness and helps individuals access the help they need.



COVID-19 Response EMERGENCY HUBS

As part of the COVID-19 response, emergency COVID-19 hubs were created to help support the community. Bringing different services under one roof allowed for coordination of the support to fit the specific needs of the residents of York.

The hubs have been there to provide essential aid to those isolating including food parcels and prescription collection. An army of volunteers have checked in on shielding residents and endeavoured to reduce the loneliness the pandemic has caused. Hotlines to the hubs have been opened to offer information or just a friendly chat to anyone that needs it. Overall, the community hub model has been mobilised during the COVID-19 pandemic to be a lifeline to the residents of York, adapting the original model to better suit the needs of the community during this time.

FUNDING

The funding for community hubs can come from a myriad of sources, varying greatly on a hub-by-hub basis. This is due to the great diversity in the services offered, costs and service users, among many other factors which impact the requirement for funding and how much can be secured. Many of the hubs in York require little funding, and donations by members of the community cover the running costs. Hiring out of the venue, grants and offering paid services can make up other funding sources to sustain the hubs.

Stories from EMERGENCY HUBS

The hubs have been able to **ease people's loneliness** being a friendly face or ear at the end of the phone at a time which has been isolating for everyone. One community hub user (aged 88) remarked "I've felt reassured that **there was someone who cared about me** and was checking I was ok" and another said "all the volunteers have been kind and friendly and have **given me company in what was a very lonely time**"

Hubs **helped connect people to services** who could aid them by offering a welcoming environment to house these services under one roof. A York resident commented "These services were **very helpful providing us with referrals** to benefits advisors, food packages, signposting and financial advice."

Hubs were able to **offer essential provisions** including food to those who were in need during pandemic. Being a focal point for the community meant the hubs provided an accessible environment for residents to comfortably receive this aid. A hub manager explained "The food project has been **critical at this time** and I really hadn't realised just how badly some people had been affected financially with the lockdown and job cuts."



WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION?

CYC REPORTS

The CYC has produced a number of reports regarding the York model for community hubs:

Community Hubs Post COVID-19

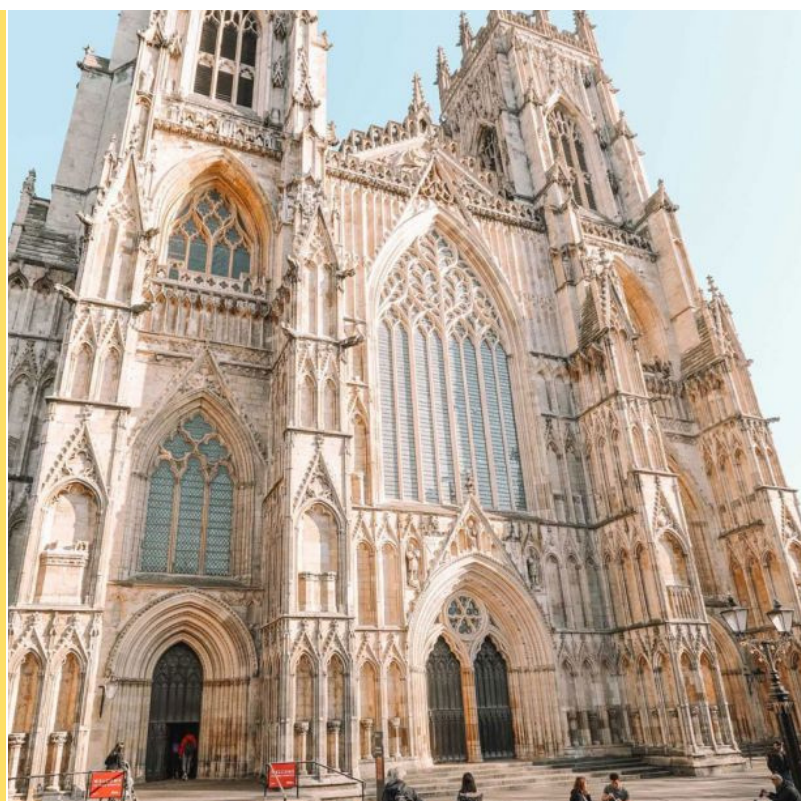
<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s142666/Community%20Hubs%20-%20Post%20Covid%20report%20PHCMT%2020200825%20ds%20comments.pdf>

Connecting People and Places - A Community Hub Approach

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s136045/Report.pdf>

Community Hubs Roll Out and the Pandemic - Types of hubs and resourcing

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s136045/Report.pdf>



USEFUL LINKS

An introductory presentation on Community Hubs by Locality

<https://www.salfordcvs.co.uk/sites/salfordcvs.co.uk/files/Community-Hubs-FINAL.pdf>

What works: Successful community hubs by Power To Change

<https://www.powertochange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Report-14-Success-Factors-Community-Hubs-DIGITAL.pdf>

For more information a number of useful resources have been collated to create a community hub library. For more information on where to find this contact shapingneighbourhoods@york.gov.uk

For any questions please contact the Shaping Neighbourhoods team at shapingneighbourhoods@york.gov.uk

This report was produced by the Isabelle Kearin (Research and Evaluation Intern) on behalf of the Community Hubs Working Group