

Developing our Newcastle Future Needs Assessment: Up to March 2014

History

In May 2012, the shadow Wellbeing for Life Board agreed to go ‘above and beyond’ the statutory requirements for a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and work together through a single policy approach called the Newcastle Future Needs Assessment (NFNA).

The Board established a NFNA Development Group to oversee the development work to bring about this ambition and we invited Professor Keith Shaw, Professor of Politics at Northumbria University to chair the group. The membership of the group is attached at Appendix One.

This report provides a summary of the work to date and provides a reminder of our work to come. The sections are:

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1. What is the Newcastle Future Needs Assessment?

It is best to think about the Newcastle Future Needs Assessment as a verb, not a noun.

As a collaborative approach it provides an integrated, coherent and evidence-based means of citizens and people from organisations working together to determine priorities in the city.

The NFNA is not only the way in which we fulfil our statutory responsibilities for undertaking a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment but also fulfils other requirements for assessments or evidence-based planning.

The NFNA aims to be:

- Holistic – to draw not just on statistical data, but other sources of knowledge such as the insights of practitioners and local people
- Participatory – based on dialogue and joint thinking through which people develop shared understanding of the issues facing the city
- Forward-looking – to help us anticipate the future and take collective action to shape it
- Value-informed - shaped by our values, particularly those of fairness and inclusion
- Integrated – to inform different levels and types of policy and strategic activity whether undertaken together or individually by partners

2. Why are we approaching it in this way?

We've learned from our experience of the former Joint Strategic Needs Assessment approach and other assessment processes in the city. We've also learned from our history as a designated city in the WHO European Healthy Cities Network where 'city health profiles' are common-place tools.

Also, as we've developed our approach, some key reports have helped us, for example:

- WHO European Region "Governance for health in the 21st century" (2012) and "Implementing a Health 2020 vision: governance for health in the 21st Century – making it happen" (2013)
- Lancet Commission report "Shaping cities for health: complexity and the planning of urban environments in the 21st century" (2012)

We summarise the key lessons as follows:

In order to create a better life for all people in the city, we are engaged in different types of activity:

- Developing healthy public policy and creating supportive environments to ensure effective population-level interventions
- Service system re-design and service improvement to ensure effective individual-level interventions
- Creating conditions for, and facilitating, community-led work to enable strong community action

The way people from organisations carry out these activities is changing as a result of a number of contextual influences:

- A growing emphasis on inter-organisational and inter-sectoral working – shifting from a focus on partnership as a ‘structure’ to embrace a collaborative way of working.
- A growing emphasis on participatory democracy – doing with people, not for or to.
- A growing recognition of the importance of activism for wellbeing and health with citizens involved in co-producing wellbeing and health; both collectively as part of a whole-of-society approach to shaping the conditions in which we live, work and learn and individually as participants in their health or care services.
- A growing emphasis on outcomes and impact from joined up services, especially in the context of increasing demand coupled with decreasing resources
- A growing emphasis on policy making that anticipates changing conditions and adapts accordingly

These new ways of working require a new way of thinking about and doing assessment. This is summarised well in the following statement from the Lancet Commission report “Shaping cities for health: complexity and the planning of urban environments in the 21st century”:

“A different kind of assessment is needed... In line with ideas of social learning, such assessment should be based on dialogue, deliberation, and discussion between key stakeholders rather than a technical exercise done by experts. It would also call on a wide range of sources of knowledge, combining statistical data with the insights and experiential knowledge held by practitioners and the lay knowledge and experience of communities”

The report goes on to say that the emphasis on dialogue and deliberation also needs to allow for:

“the value-laden nature of policy interventions and the creation of forums to debate the moral and ethical dimensions of different approaches”

As we have developed our approach we have also learned from other developments, particularly through our involvement as a case study site in the OECD’s initiative on ‘How’s Life in your region?’. Appendix Two provides further information.

3. Making it real...principles and practices

There is no simple wiring diagram or flow chart that can summarise the approach that we are embedding as the Newcastle Future Needs Assessment. Different requirements, organisations and circumstances will require flexibility rather than a rigid formula. Trying to impose a checklist or template approach to decision making and development processes is more likely to disengage people, than engage them.

The Lancet commission quote above implies the need to draw together statistical insights with participatory approaches, such as those used for staff involvement and community engagement/patient participation. We have therefore developed some key principles, supported by resources, methods and techniques, which should enable effective collaborative working across the different areas of activity we are involved in.

Principle	Examples of products/ resources to draw on	Examples of supporting methods and techniques
<p>Citizens' views and experience will be at the heart of shaping what we do</p> <p>Requiring us to listen, understand and learn before we decide</p>	<p>Community narratives and reports accessed through Know Newcastle</p>	<p>Let's Talk - Website; ThinkAbout; WalkAbout</p> <p>Community conversations (designed using techniques such as appreciative inquiry; Participatory appraisal; Open space technology; Wellbeing Signature**)</p> <p>Making good use of community fora and networks (e.g. Community panels; Patient Participation Groups; User Forums)</p> <p>Case study 'reviews'</p> <p>Reflective practice/action learning/action research</p>

Principle	Examples of products/ resources to draw on	Examples of supporting methods and techniques
<p>We use shared evidence of current and future needs as our starting point</p>	<p>Statistical insights and reports accessed through Know Newcastle</p> <p>Modelled projections where available</p> <p>Research commissioned or carried out by partners individually or collectively</p>	<p>Data available at events and workshops (e.g. in the form of poster displays)</p> <p>Facilitated activities such as Alternative Scenarios; use of simulation models</p>
<p>We draw on information on what we are already doing as well as what has worked elsewhere</p>	<p>Service activity information accessed through Know Newcastle</p> <p>Routine performance monitoring</p> <p>Evaluations</p> <p>Evidence reviews such as NICE guidance; Cochrane Reviews; commissioned research</p>	<p>Learning with, and from other cities, e.g. through Regional Networks; Core Cities; European and UK Healthy Cities Networks</p>
<p>We will collaborate - bringing many minds to the issue from the outset and welcoming the challenges that our different perspectives bring.</p>	<p>Data openly available on Know Newcastle</p>	<p>Collaborative 'task and finish work'</p> <p>Policy 'hacks' bringing together a range of insights to address shared opportunities or concerns</p>
<p>We pool our capacity and resources to make the fairest and greatest impact on improving lives of the people in the city</p>	<p>Statistical insights into social gradient and variation in the city accessed through Know Newcastle</p>	<p>Joint financing; pooled budgets; total place.</p> <p>Practices that involve citizens in allocating resources (e.g. Community budgets; U-decide; Small Sparks; Ward Budgets; Council Pound)</p>

Principle	Examples of products/ resources to draw on	Examples of supporting methods and techniques
We communicate why we consider something is a priority	The Wellbeing for Life Strategy	Plans of individual partners
We understand all the potential outcomes – positive and negative	Integrated impact assessment*	Integrated impact assessment*
We will identify and build on assets and opportunities, not just find problems to solve	Wellbeing Signature** Neighbourhood asset maps	Community conversations (designed using techniques such as appreciative inquiry; Participatory appraisal; Open space technology; Wellbeing Signature**) Embedding asset based practice into what we do
We always consider how we can empower more and deliver less	Cooperative working	

* Collaborative and participative way of doing this to be developed

** Wellbeing Signature is a tool (under development) that enables groups of citizens to identify areas that positively or negatively impact on their wellbeing in order to inform actions that they subsequently take – on their own or in partnership.

It is particularly important that the Wellbeing for Life Board and its partners put into place systems to embed these principles. For example, requiring the provision of relevant statistics to support recommended policy or commissioning decisions.

4. Know Newcastle – enabling shared access to statistical and qualitative insights

As we developed our Newcastle Future Needs Assessment, it became immediately apparent that we needed to create a shared way of drawing together statistical information about people in the city, the factors that affect their lives and their wellbeing and health. We also wanted to create a repository for reports that provide more qualitative insights into the lives and experiences of people in the city.

We have therefore created a website, called Know Newcastle, as a resource to support our collaborative working.

At the time that Know Newcastle launches in March 2014 it will provide access to two core 'products' that are best thought of as an 'input' for our collaborative working.

Firstly, **Know Your City**. Know Your City is an authored document that is accessible in the form of pdfs on Know Newcastle. It draws together quantitative data and research to help inform our understanding of the people of Newcastle, the factors that shape their wellbeing and health, inequalities in growing up and growing old and illnesses and diseases. Wherever, the data source allows we present information disaggregated for different communities in the city so that differences in experiences can be understood.

The first version was produced in September 2012 and has already informed work in the city such as the Wellbeing for Life strategy, partners' plans and bids for funding. In late 2013/early 2014, Know your city has been refreshed – drawing in new data (such as Census 2011) and learning from the lessons and feedback of the first version.

Secondly, **Know Your Community**. Know your community is a collection of information to inform understanding about communities of geography (initially the electoral ward footprint) and some communities of identity/interest (e.g. people with disabilities; people from black and minority ethnic communities).

All 'Know your community' exist of:

- A series of 'facts and figures' about that community – essentially a snapshot of the same statistical insights within Know your city.
- Community narratives that give greater qualitative insight into the particular community and what is important to them. These are in the process of being developed and will be uploaded to Know Newcastle once they are ready.
- Additional reports such as those arising from consultations and research undertaken by partners that are relevant to understanding the views and lives of the community in question.

In addition, the geographical 'Know your community' will include access to the Decent Neighbourhood Standards report and, if current technical difficulties can be overcome, a map showing the facilities and buildings in the relevant area.

As at March 2014, work has focussed on putting in place the ‘facts and figures’ and making sure the Know Newcastle platform enables the sharing of the qualitative information and reports as they become available.

However, the development of Know Newcastle is unlikely to stop here, providing development resources can be found, further developments include:

- Building on ‘facts and figures’ to include information on service activity.
- Creating space for accessing reports that are the product of ‘whole system reviews’ or ‘policy reviews’ carried out by citizens and partners through our NFNA practices.

5. Creating opportunities for collaborating

The third part of the Wellbeing for Life Strategy already includes a commitment to adopt new ways of coming together – with participative, task focussed working – rather than a representative, structural model of partnership. Realising this commitment is fundamental to embedding the principles of the Newcastle Future Needs Assessment.

In June 2013, the Wellbeing for Life Board discussed a paper on organising ourselves to deliver the Wellbeing for Life Strategy. The paper included:

A proposal to create a programme of events and development days including an annual Wellbeing for Life Summit.

Such a programme would enable people to:

- Draw on statistical and qualitative insights and if appropriate to the issue consider possible future scenarios
- Surface and share different views and perspectives
- Give an opportunity to draw in people who will prompt and challenge us, for example those who have knowledge of the evidence base
- Build relationships that help create the ‘glue’ of collaborative working

There are many participative methodologies that can be used to maximise the quality of the conversations and create the conditions where people are more likely to learn with and from each other.

A proposal to draw together ‘task and finish’ groups when required.

‘Task and finish’ groups allow an appropriate group of people to come together to review an area of work and/or take forward commitments within the Wellbeing for Life Strategy.

In order to fulfil their role, groups may need to:

- Draw on statistical and qualitative insights and if appropriate to the issue consider possible future scenarios

- Review evidence about effectiveness in relation to the issue
- Work to map and understanding existing work in the city
- Surface and share different views and perspectives

The first 'task and finish' group of this kind was established by the Wellbeing for Life Board in June 2013. The group was tasked to review the recommendations in "Health First: an evidence based alcohol strategy for the UK" (published by the Alcohol Health Alliance UK) with a view to identifying appropriate local actions. Whilst the review work is still ongoing, the group has already created greater shared awareness of different areas of action and drawn on local research expertise.

6. Maintaining and applying the evidence

The success of the Newcastle Future Needs Assessment is dependent on citizens and partners working together to draw on and use evidence in practical decision making.

It is therefore important that it is seen as a new way of working for existing people in our existing functions. Existing staff have a wealth of experience and knowledge they can bring to the approach but may also need to develop skills and confidence in some areas, such as understanding how to apply evidence; asset based practice or designing participatory events.

However, given the importance of statistical insights and other research as a 'foundation' for the Newcastle Future Needs Assessment, it is important that we configure our resources to meet the evidence and research requirements of those involved in collaborative decision making – whether for policy, service design, commissioning or investment.

As a minimum requirement, we need to optimise the use of Know Newcastle as a city information resource. This would not only support the use of common data in decision making but also allow for monitoring of trends in the determinants of wellbeing and health, outcomes, and equity. This would require:

- Data management. Involving keeping datasets up-to-date and ensuring new data is fed through into different 'products', such as Know Your City, Know Your Community
- Coordination of information (data, research, reports) with/from partners
- Quality management and quality control of the website and its content; for example reviewing the quality of consultation/research reports before uploading them
- Training people to use Know Newcastle and understand the way in which data can and can't be used

However, we also want to go beyond this minimum requirement to ensure that evidence and research is used in practical decision making – such as policy or commissioning decisions. We therefore need to ensure there is capacity to:

- source additional research and evidence in response to the needs of those involved in collaborative discussions and joint commissioning;
- provide technical guidance on research and evidence-based policy making and commissioning.
- line up commitments and changes across partner organisations to maximise impact.

We have therefore started to explore how we can reconfigure and build on our existing resources to maximise the maintenance and application of evidence, including that within Know Newcastle.

7. Learning through doing

Whilst, March 2014 marks the end of the most intensive development phase for the Newcastle Future Needs Assessment, our work hasn't sat still in the meantime. We have already taken opportunities that have arisen to start to embed the approach for real – learning about our strengths and areas for improvements through the experiences of these innovations. Here are a small selection of examples.

The first example illustrates how the views and perspectives of citizens and service providers were drawn on alongside statistical insights to inform policy level changes.

Promoting Active Ageing

In November 2011, Newcastle City Council's Cabinet held a Thinkabout on "Promoting active ageing". In the lead up to this Policy Cabinet there were two events.

- The Elders Council hosted an event for older people to discuss their views on what would enable them to age well. The design of the event included a quiz to enable the participants to gain insights into data about older people's experiences of the city.
- Key agencies in Newcastle came together to discuss their views on what organisations in the city can do to help people to age well. Organisations identified the city's progress against key success factors. Drawing on prior experiences of using data, we used poster materials to demonstrate how older people's experiences of the city differ from those of other age groups.

Participants at both events were pleased that the then Deputy Cabinet Member for Adult Care Services who later became the Deputy Cabinet Member for Age-friendly cities was able to attend to learn more about their experiences and views.

Together these events, provided a good foundation for older people's perspectives and those of service providers to feed into the Policy Cabinet, enriching the conversations on the day.

The second example illustrates how a group of citizens led a process to allocate resources in their ward and became more informed about their local area through having access to statistical insights.

Kenton Bright Ideas Panel

A group of Kenton residents came together to form the Bright Ideas Panel¹. The group worked with the support of two council officers to coordinate a Small Sparks scheme which launched in April 2013. The scheme provided very small amounts of money to groups to do something that makes a difference to local community life. The work culminated in a Small Sparks celebration event in September 2013 where all those who had received a grant plus many others who had been involved came together to share what they had achieved, share ideas and connect with other people.

Later, in October 2013, the group discussed an early version of the data being prepared for Kenton ward's Know your community facts and figures as well as a draft report which drew on this data. Even though at that time the data was not all in a very accessible format, the discussions enabled group members to compare experiences and perspectives from different parts of the ward. The new understandings have helped identify areas where the group would like to make a difference in the future.

The group are now planning the next stage in participatory funding in Kenton ward drawing on both U-decide and Small Sparks.

The third example illustrates how we achieved a statutory requirement through drawing on the principles of the Newcastle Future Needs Assessment and the insights available in Know Your City. It also illustrates how strong ongoing relationships can improve the quality and performance of services.

The statutory Homelessness review

One of the statutory requirements we have to fulfil is a requirement in The Homelessness Act 2002. This requires local authorities to review homelessness in their area every five years and then to produce a strategy to prevent homelessness. Whilst the requirement falls on the council, the process of the Review requires a shared sector view of the challenges faced in preventing homelessness and working with people in housing need.

The housing and homelessness sector already holds quarterly review meetings to review activity and learn from trend data and case studies with regards to what works and doesn't work so well. The meetings involve people who provide and use services and therefore is a key opportunity for their views and experiences to remain at the heart of what services in this sector do. This regular opportunity to learn, plan action to improve services and resolve difficulties also provides a foundation for strong inter-agency working relationships. It has also demonstrably improved performance and value for money by the better application of commissioned resources to resolve agreed problems. This approach is at the core of Newcastle not having used B&B accommodation since 2006 and halving the number of evictions from Your Homes Newcastle tenancies.

¹ You can find out more at <http://brightideasnewcastle.co.uk/>

The five-yearly review fell in 2013 alongside the development of the Newcastle Future Needs Assessment approach and the developing Wellbeing for Life strategy. In carrying out the Review, those involved drew on the data in the first version of Know Your City to understand the broader city context within which the housing and homelessness sector operates. They supplemented this information with their in-depth knowledge of the policy context and also drew on trends in service activity drawn from routine monitoring information. The first version of the report that summarised the review process was consulted on and circulated widely for comment allowing a final opportunity for the network of practitioners, stakeholders and service users to check that all their views and experiences have been taken on board

8. Future developments

We've come a long way already and as we embed this new way of working we will continue to learn.

However, in particular we note that there are some tools/approaches that we need to focus on developing further. For example, we need to draw on latest developments around 'quality of life impact assessments' and our own experiences of impact assessments to understand how we can carry them out through an integrated, collaborative approach.

Appendix One: Members of the NFNA Development Group

The work of the NFNA development group spanned the period 2012-2014. During this period there were a number of organisational changes that the group had to accommodate. We include all contributors here, but it should be noted that not all of those listed were members at the same time.

Organisation/sector	Membership
Northumbria University	Professor Keith Shaw (Group Chair)
Newcastle City Council	Cllr Marion Talbot Andrew Lewis, Ewen Weir, John Collings, Cathy Bull, Rachel Baillie, Meng Khaw*, Dawn Scott, David Slater, Mick Murphy
Newcastle based Clinical Commissioning Groups	Guy Pilkington Relton Cummings
Voluntary and community sector	Sally Young, Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service Ann McNulty, HAREF
Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Bev Reid
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust	Caroline Wild

* joint appointment with former Newcastle Primary Care Trust.

The group have been supported by a 'NFNA development team' including:

- Colin Williams, formerly Director of Transformation now Head of Resilience, Prevention and Early Intervention, Newcastle City Council
- Steve Park, formerly Head of Communications now Assistant Director Policy and Communications, Newcastle City Council
- Phil Hunter, formerly Head of Policy and Research, Newcastle City Council
- Sarah Ledger, Policy and Information Manager, Newcastle City Council
- Helen Wilding, Wellbeing for Life Development Lead, Newcastle City Council
- Val Corris, Public Health Intelligence Specialist, formerly Newcastle Primary Care Trust, then Newcastle City Council (post currently vacant)
- Clare Toas, Public Health Analyst, Newcastle City Council
- Louise Crosby, Policy and Research, Newcastle City Council
- Nick Gray, Policy and Research, Newcastle City Council

Appendix Two: Learning with, and from, others and contributing to wider developments

In November 2012, we were approached by the OECD and asked to become a case study site in their project – “How’s life in your region? Measuring Regional and Local Wellbeing for Policy Making”. The project draws on the OECD’s Better Life initiative on wellbeing at national level, work on regional inequalities and interest in measuring and promoting wellbeing in cities.

The goals of the OECD project are to:

- Develop an analytical framework for measuring wellbeing in regions and cities
- Present a set of internationally comparable measures of wellbeing and a critical assessment of the statistical agenda ahead, and
- Help policy makers at all levels to use them for improving policy results.

Newcastle became one of seven case study sites – the others being Rome; Sardinia; Southern region of Denmark; North region of Netherlands; State of Morelos, Mexico; and US Partnership for Sustainable Communities.

We hosted a workshop in May 2013² welcoming guests from the OECD; Southern Denmark; and, Sardinia as well as inviting speakers from Office National Statistics and The Young Foundation. This gave us an opportunity to explore issues related to measuring wellbeing, including the pros and cons of doing so. We also learned about the analytical frameworks being developed by others.

In January 2014, Helen Wilding, Wellbeing for Life Development Lead, was invited by the OECD to participate in a round table discussion alongside people from other case study sites and prominent researchers and policy makers engaged in measuring wellbeing. Participants at the round table felt that focussing on wellbeing can create greater complementary between different policy interests. Whilst measuring wellbeing can start out as a technical, statistical agenda – in the end it becomes a political tool.

Through this process, we’ve learned that we have lots in common with other case study sites. We have all embraced challenges around:

- The variety of different definitions of, and perspectives on, wellbeing
- Balancing measures of ‘objective’ wellbeing whilst allowing for its subjectivity
- The benefits and limitations of using existing data in new ways
- Making information accessible
- The importance of demonstrating inequalities and differences, not just averages – understanding that different territories, such as cities, distribute opportunities for people
- The challenge of translating new understandings about wellbeing into policy actions that can make a difference

² More detail on this workshop including copies of the presentations are at <http://www.wellbeingforlife.org.uk/measuring-wellbeing-and-changes-wellbeing-newcastle>

- The need to ‘blend’ a focus on people with a focus on the places within which people live their lives.

But, in other ways, our approach is unique, for example:

- We are the only site that set out to describe wellbeing in a document using quantitative data to support that. The others set out to create a form of ‘wellbeing index’ presenting data without accompanying narrative.
- We are the only site to draw on an empirically-informed conceptual model of the social determinants of wellbeing and health (the Barton and Grant model) as an analytical framework. As a result, we talk about measuring and understanding the *determinants of health and wellbeing*, whilst the others sites and the OECD itself use very similar indicators within an analytical framework they refer to as *dimensions* of wellbeing.
- We are the only site drawing explicitly on drivers and learning from the World Health Organisation and other key public health research on social determinants.

The links with the OECD and their other case study sites continue.

As well as being involved in this key development, we have drawn from our experience and practice to make a difference elsewhere. For example:

- Nottingham County are drawing on Know Your City’s structure for use within their JSNA.
- We have provided information on our experiences to inform the direction of Public Health England’s developments to do with intelligence on Mental Health and Wellbeing.