

Four Shifts Event Report

Report on the Four Shifts event held on Monday 27th November 2023
at the View Hotel in Eastbourne



Four Shifts - This Report

This report draws together the ideas, reflections and themes which emerged from the Four Shifts event held in Eastbourne in November 2023.

More information about the activities and materials are shared in a separate activity pack for wider use and adaptation.

We want to continue the conversation and to keep sharing learning, knowledge and experience of asset based ways of working. A programme of learning for anyone with an interest in Asset Based Community Development and asset based ways of working is being developed.



The Four Shifts - Event Aims

The aim of the event was to explore how asset based community development (ABCD) and other related asset based approaches encourage and support more joined up and responsive ways of working. The objective was to draw out and share the knowledge of everyone in the room.

The event was built around the Four Shifts Framework which has emerged through the evaluation of the Making it Happen ABCD Programme. The Four Shifts describe key factors that are outcomes of the ABCD approach, and which support genuine community involvement and collaboration in system change.

Participants came from different sectors, different parts of the county and from different parts of the ecosystem – from grass roots community groups to infrastructure organisations to formal services.



The Event Programme

Event outline

Mimi's Poem – a poem written and performed by Mimi Fe

Setting the Scene – Angie Greany (Making it Happen and SCDA)

Touching Base: sharing dreams and gifts for social transformation –
Fenya Sharkey (Compass Community Arts)

The Ripple Effect Game – Sherry Clark (Transition Town Hastings)

The Four Shifts Framework – Ellen Care (Collaborate CIC)

Snakes and Ladders! – playing the game

Postcards from the Future – a message from your future self

Goody Bags – sharing gifts

The Lone Nut and the First Follower – video introduced by Paul Rideout (ESCC)



Mimi's Poem

I am me, not the learning disability girl
Don't assume you know.
I am trying to speak up
Trying to be heard
Sometimes it is like shouting in the wind
To those who will not hear.

Like being trapped
In an iron bubble
Stuck in steel, under a weight of coverings.

Snakes and Ladders

Feedback Summary Report

Introduction

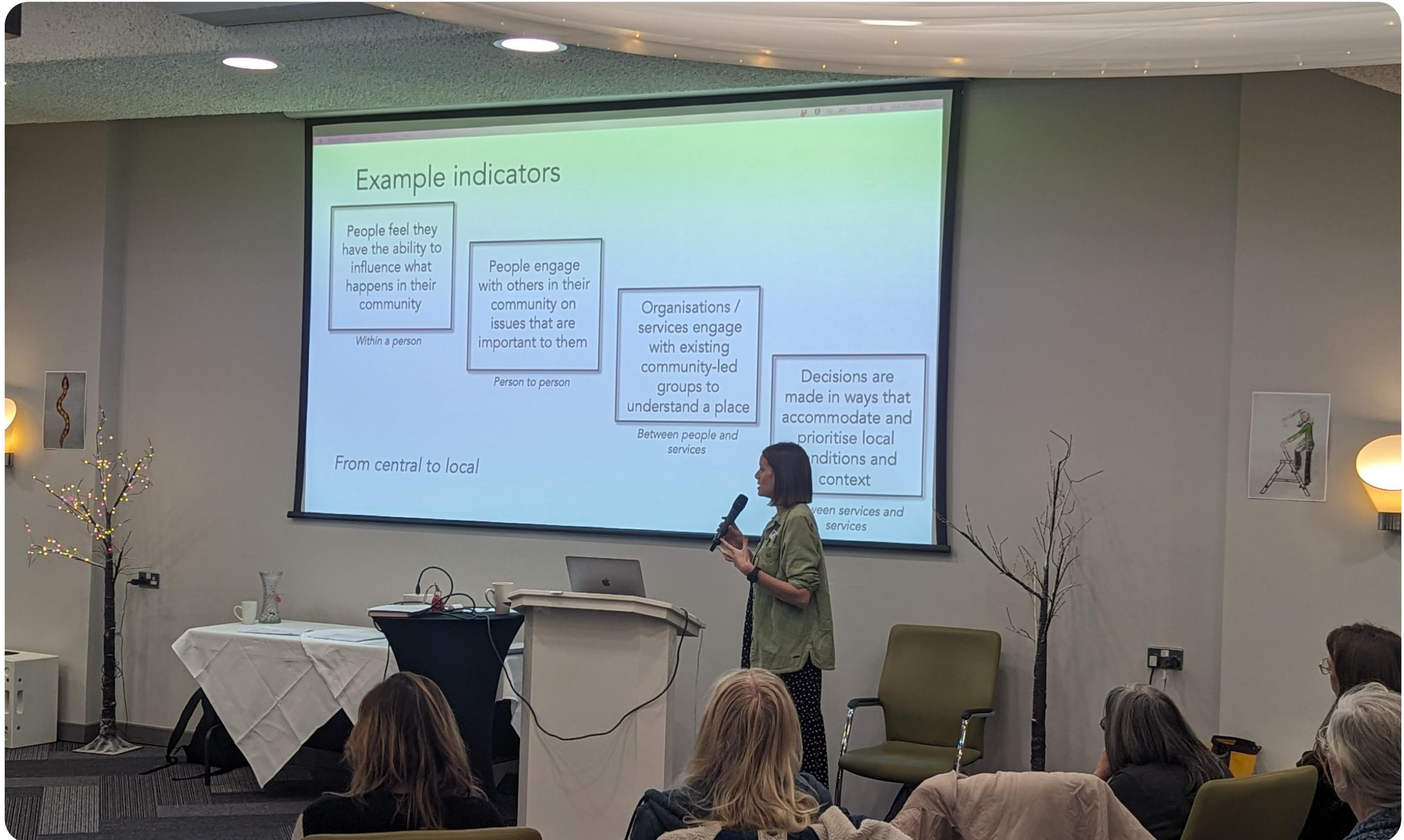
Seven groups played their own version of the Four Shifts Snakes and Ladders game, each exploring a different scenario or vision and the shifts needed to achieve this.

Each game has been documented via photos so you can see the specific elements that each group explored in their discussions (their vision, the steps to achieve it, the enablers and the challenges) as well as how they connected them together. We have synthesised materials from the different games to identify common themes that came up across the different scenarios they were exploring.

More information about how to play the game is included at the end of the report. Here we share key themes in relation to the visions, steps, challenges and enablers.









Snakes and Ladders

Visions and Scenarios

Vision summary

A number of themes and ideas surface multiple times across different elements of the write-up and are therefore perhaps areas of focus for thinking about where there is energy for future work.

It seems that lots of conversations touched on funding (both what is challenging about current models and what better could look like); the importance of building connections and relationships across the system; how to communicate effectively; and the underlying mindsets, beliefs and attitudes that people bring to this work, which can either help or hinder progress.

Vision themes

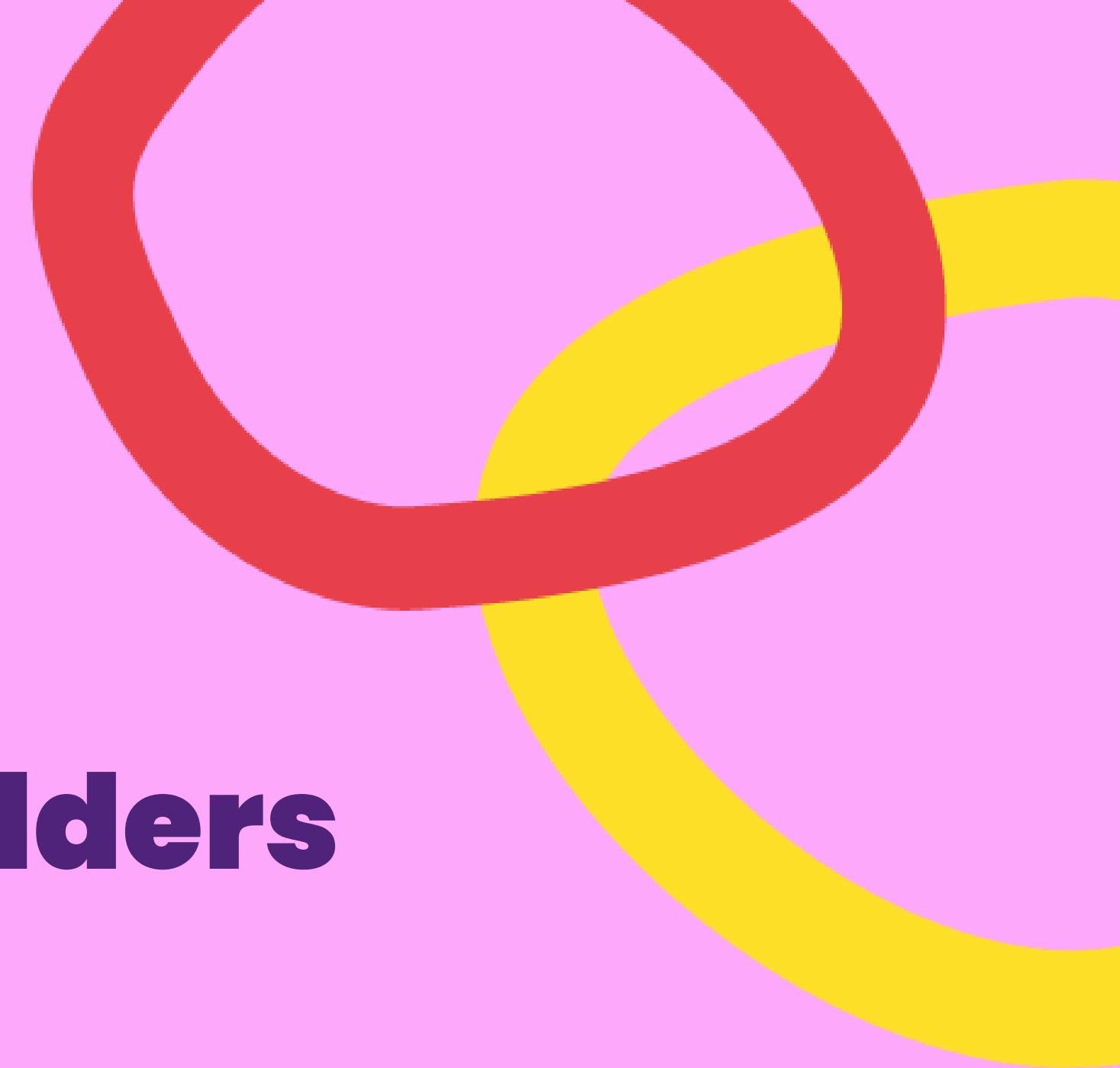
Each group identified their own specific scenario or vision to work on. Taken together, the East Sussex people in the room wanted to work towards is one where:

- Communities have more **power, voice, ownership and involvement** in their places and the design of services, and the **funding and infrastructure** to support this is in place;
- **Community life is thriving** with strong, sustainable connections and access to services, groups and activities, including in rural areas;
- People feel and are **listened to** and have the confidence they will be heard – especially young people;
- People feel **pride, happiness, wellbeing** and a sense of being **nurtured** in their communities;
- People have **agency**, are **engaged** and feel they **want to contribute** and understand how to, and volunteers are active and engaged;
- People step up to take **leadership** and **ownership of change** and finding solutions;
- There is **collaboration** and camaraderie to achieve **shared goals**, with **relationships** and the **process of collaboration** valued as well as the outcome;
- There is **trust** across partners and stakeholders, including around funding and how money is used in communities.



Snakes and Ladders

The Stepping Stones



Stepping Stones

We asked people to identify the 'stepping stones' to get to the vision they were working towards in their game, thinking about what would need to change from where we are now, and what might this look like for individuals, communities and services.

In some cases the steps identified were very specific to the particular vision the group were working towards, but for this summary, we have drawn out 'generic' versions of the key steps people identified to make change.

They are not linear and may be dependent on one another to different extents. The order they are presented in here does not reflect how they were ordered in the games, which was different in different cases.



Stepping Stone Theme One

Join-up, connect and build collaborations to make change

- Understand **what is already happening** in communities – through organisations, groups and individuals.
- Identify and **connect** with key parties – both those who are already interested and others who may not yet be involved or so keen – and **co-design** how you will work together.
- Avoid competition and repetition, instead focusing on better **coordination, communication and collaboration** to join up different strands and initiatives effectively.
- **Connect** across statutory partners and between local and national initiatives.
- Share and make use of **existing opportunities** (e.g. events, communication channels) rather than always setting up new things.
- Engage in **active change**, not just talking shops

Stepping Stone Theme Two

Develop shared vision and purpose

- Get people round the table and **share your dreams, values and aspirations.**
- Work together to build a shared understanding of your **common interests** and **shared goals**.
- Agree what you want to do, what you hope to achieve and what the **benefits (to all parties)** will be.

Stepping Stone Theme Three

Develop shared outcomes

- Agree **shared outcomes** across partners/organisations (either on a project by project basis or more strategically) to align what you're working towards.
- Agree and align how you will **understand change** together (e.g. indicators and outcome measures).



Stepping Stone Theme Four

Find the right language

- Explore what language, tone and **communication approaches** are going to be most effective in your context.
- Consider what will land with specific **local audiences**.
- Recognise that your language and style may need to be different in **different contexts**.

Stepping Stone Theme Five

Build diverse networks and partnerships

- Identify, support and work with **community 'leaders'** and those who can reach beyond the 'usual suspects' to those who are **less heard**
- **Nurture groups and partnerships** at different sizes and scales – support smaller groups and grow the 'off-shoots'
- Join up **across sectors** – youth, community, civil society, council, private sector etc.
- Include **diverse** groups and role models
- **Enable connection** across different e.g. intergenerational opportunities

Stepping Stone Theme Six

Coproduce with communities

- Enable people to take **active roles** from early on in the design and development of their community and own their achievements.
- **Fund and resource** community participation properly - pay facilitators and ensure participants are suitably valued/recompensed.
- **Make it easy** for grassroots community groups to receive funding and resources to work with their communities (i.e. minimal bureaucracy, maximum support from local authorities/health etc.).
- Explore **participatory grant making** as opposed to competitive approaches to funding.
- **Be led by communities** and meet people where they are with flexibility, responsiveness and understanding.
- Support people to make their **self-determined positive contribution**, including with needed resources, affordable and ongoing training and skills sharing

Stepping Stone Theme Seven

Connect to the local

- Recognise what is **different and unique** about each locality/neighbourhood.
- Identify and understand what will **strengthen** that specific community.
- Focus on **hyper-local** benefits and connections.

Stepping Stone Theme Eight

Share knowledge, understanding and experience

- Create opportunities for strategic decision makers and those on the ground to **connect, listen and feedback**.
- Create opportunities to share advice and experience and offer **mutual support** (e.g. legal advice, structural advice, how to write a funding bid, how to evaluate the work, where to go for funding, support networks).



Stepping Stone Theme Nine

Communication

- Identify the most effective models of **communication**.
- Consider what branding might be needed and how this fits at a **local level**.
- Keep communicating and **building understanding** across the system: community, civil society, statutory bodies.
- Spontaneous or outside acknowledgement or **celebration of what's being done**.

Stepping Stone Theme Ten

Ensure inclusion and address and remove barriers to participation

- Digital exclusion
- Accessibility for people with disabilities
- Translation needs
- Financial exclusion
- Different literacy levels
- Ways of getting around and gathering



Stepping Stone Theme Eleven

Secure funding and resources

- Make funding available and easy to access.
- Provide signposting to wider funding opportunities.
- Support people with grants and applications.
- Reduce competition for funding.
- Move towards more participatory methods of funding e.g. participatory grant making.
- Provide support and advice to secure funding e.g. help with grant applications.
- Provide other sorts of support needed to support change e.g. community development workers to work alongside community groups





Snakes and Ladders

Challenges, Barriers and Enablers



Challenges and Enablers

We also asked the groups to identify the 'snakes' (**challenges and barriers**) and 'ladders' (**enablers** – both those that already exist and those that are needed) to support this journey and change to happen.

We have pulled out the **common themes** and some **examples**. In many cases, the same themes (e.g. funding, communication, relationships) came up as both a challenge and an enabler, so these are presented alongside one another so that it is easy to read across the 'flipsides'. This suggests that in many cases there are positive examples to learn from in what is already happening in East Sussex and at least some of the 'solutions' that would make a systems shift to ABCD more possible are already known.

The challenge then is to ensure this existing knowledge, practice and behaviour is grown and spread – in addition to innovating where needed.

Funding

SNAKES

- Limited resources, reducing budgets and requirements for cost savings
- Lack of capital funds, and/ or capital funds without resource funding
- Short-term funding
- Competition for funding instead of working together at local and national level
- Lack of funding for community-led engagement
- Cost of consultations
- Restrictive funding with too many conditions e.g. not paying practitioners for their time

LADDERS

- Successful funding bids
- 'Free-range' funding
- Long-term investment in communities and service providers working together
- Small amounts of funding that help unlock match funding

Communication and language

SNAKES

- Negative language and narratives or language that alienates people
- Reliance on technical communications
- Reliance on written literature can deter a potential connection

LADDERS

- Effective communication including frequent, regular contact and communication between partners and stakeholders
- Effective publicity
- Conversations happening 'on the ground'
- Listening and giving feedback/updates

Relationships

SNAKES

- Competition rather than collaboration: competition/fighting over audience and service users; competing priorities and perspectives; egos
- Difficult relationships with particular (powerful) stakeholders e.g. town council
- Relationship between e.g. steering groups and the wider community – not being representative
- Attitudes towards partners and the relationships
- Relationships damaged by lack of communication

LADDERS

- Community groups and activists; people with specialist knowledge, shared interests and common goals
- Groups who have done similar things
- Using the relationships and assets at each level
- Building on existing relationships
- HVA adviser finding someone in the community with expertise

Assets

SNAKES

- Loss of community interests
- Dependence on weather/outside space
- Not having a place where they feel welcome or knowing where you can go

LADDERS

- Volunteers
- Voluntary sector activities and opportunities for groups etc.
- Community workers
- Partnerships
- Local artists
- People's parliament community council
- Place-based accessible welcoming space
- Local knowledge & history
- Citizen Science
- Making it Happen
- Youth parliament, Young Enterprise, Duke of Edinburgh Award
- ABCD
- Multigenerational working
- Commitment
- Common interests

Community and connection

SNAKES

- Silo thinking/working and a lack of holistic systems
- (Risk of) duplication due to not enough information sharing
- Not knowing who is active in a community or engaging with community organisations
- Lack of feedback / connections to the 'higher ups'
- Poor transport infrastructure
- Segregating groups
- Lack of prevention

LADDERS

- Encouraging cross-group working
- Community events and groups that encourage connection and allow different people/groups to mix
- One connection can help climb the ladder
- Helping people to share their stories and realise they are not on their own
- Create voice for the community across class and income brackets
- Creating community and sharing assets in local places

Mindsets, beliefs and attitudes

SNAKES

- Poverty of imagination in constrained circumstances
- Perceptions
- Levels of aspiration (both high and low aspiration can be challenging in different ways)
- Overprotection and anxiety
- Stigma related to poverty, housing, other ACEs
- Being labelled as a do-gooder for trying to make changes
- Scepticism about the likelihood of making a positive difference - in the teenagers, young adults, the much older
- Judgement, stereotyping, labelling
- People feeling they don't have confidence/tools to be community leaders
- Not valuing community practitioners

LADDERS

- Valuing and recognising unpaid contributions
- Recognising that people are the experts in where they live
- Celebrating, valuing and recognising what is happening already through community and individual impact

Policy and process

SNAKES

- Insurance x 2
- Voluntary time taken for 'red tape hoops'
- Overly burdensome governance and health and safety
- Licencing
- Hiring staff
- Denial of accessing volunteering due to age, ability etc; 90 year old being too old to volunteer
- No background support
- Need opportunities to try and learn from actions

LADDERS

- Positive policy change e.g. Youth voices in funding bids
- Political change
- Being proportionate about requirements and processes e.g. governance, health and safety

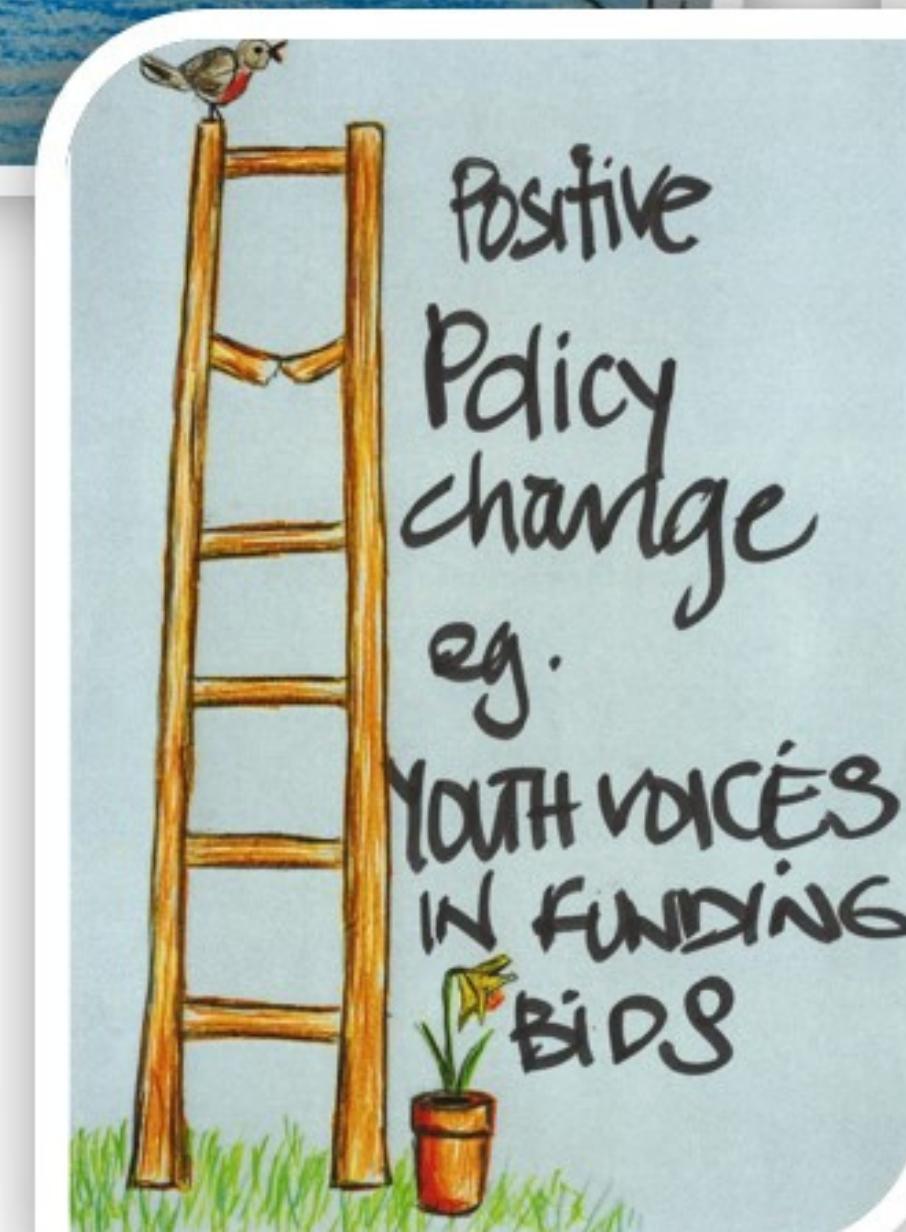
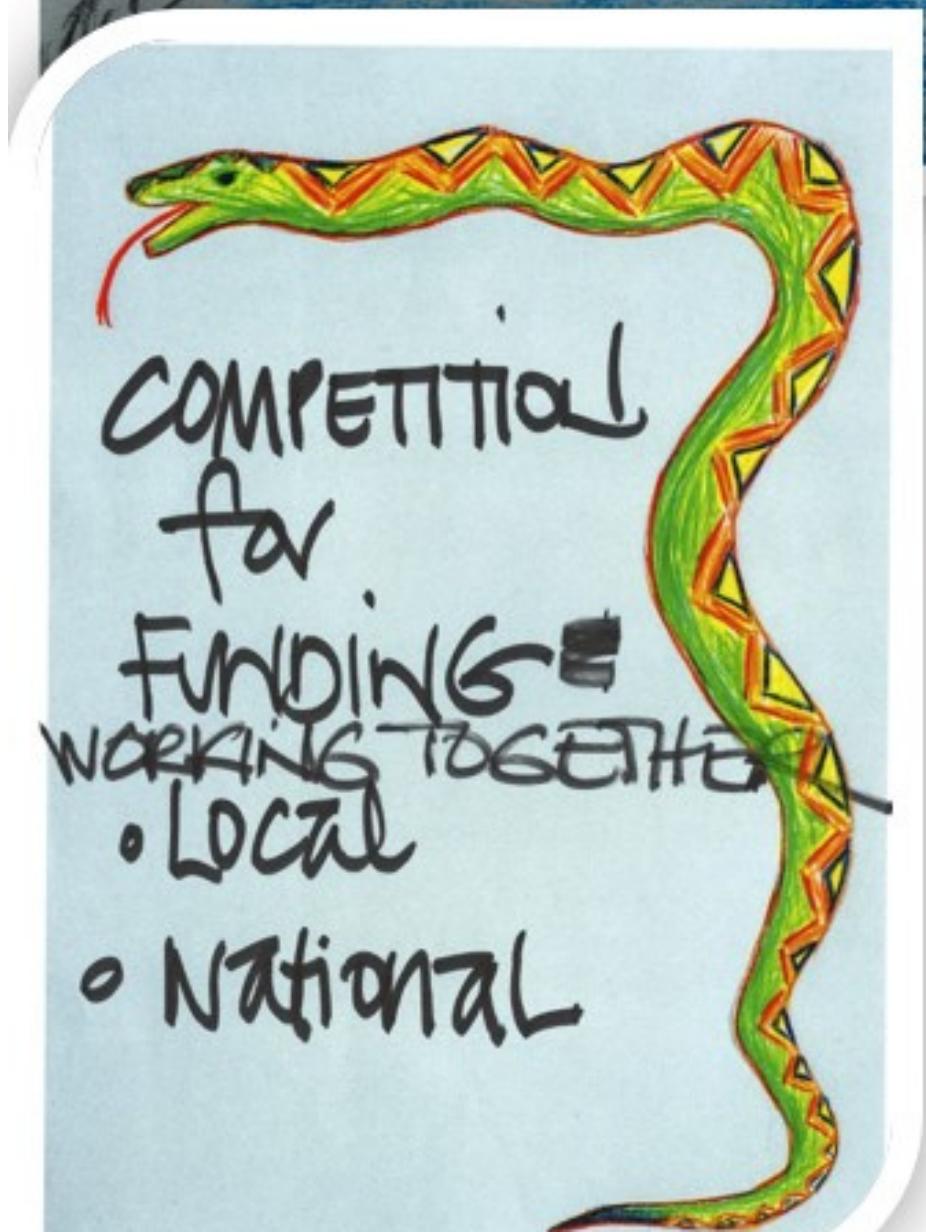
Knowledge

SNAKES

- Mission Drift (can be from a place of enthusiasm)

LADDERS

- Research and shared knowledge
- Training sessions
- Enabling events that offer advice and information
- Place to share knowledge and resources (e.g. volunteer centres)
- Enabling peer education to cascade
- Aware and skilled public sector decision makers





Post Cards from our Future Selves

Post Cards

Participants were asked to choose a post card that spoke to them from a wide selection of designs. They were invited to write a message from their future self perhaps using the following prompts:

Here in 2033 things are...

We've been able to... because we...

People in the community tell me...

I'm proud that I...

Key themes drawn from those cards follow here!



Post Card themes – improvements for individuals in 2033

- Improved quality of life particularly for children and young people
- People are healthy and happy
- There is far greater equality
- Action on climate change has happened
- There is far greater sustainability and improved environments
- Food poverty has been eradicated

Post Card themes – benefits for people and groups in 2033

- The focus is on strengths, talents and connection
- Community connection and social networks are strong
- There is community pride and ownership
- Young people have confidence to be involved in influencing change
- Communities are engaged and empowered

Post Card themes – improvements for people and services in 2033

- Communities feel valued and heard
- Time and energy has been given to build relationships and trust
- Systems work alongside and respond to communities
- Communities are at the centre of driving solutions
- Organisations are led by those with lived experience
- Power has been devolved to communities

Post Card themes – improvements to services in 2033

- Decisions are based on people and the assets they have rather than traditional models
- There is far greater collaboration across sectors and organisations
- Services are integrated
- There is less competition for funding due to greater collaboration
- Services are fully accessible
- Investment has been placed in prevention
- The economy has been rejuvenated as a result of the system shifts that have occurred

4 SHIFTS workshop 27 November 2023

Here in 2033
people in East
Sussex feel pride
in their communities
+ tell me they
feel valued +
supported. I'm proud
that I helped
build that by
taking an asset based



Postcard designed by Compass Artists 2023

approach in the
work I did -
not designing the
solutions for the
people but
listening + supporting
them to design
them themselves

Liam

4 SHIFTS workshop 27 November 2023



Here in 2033 there are
clear opportunities for
communities to
work. Not everything is
joined but relationships
of trust across the system
are strong

Postcard designed by Compass Artists 2023



4 SHIFTS workshop 27 November 2023



Here in 2036 (as I prepare for retirement) things are more equal. There is less inequality and society is more compassionate and less adversarial.

We've been able to rejuvenate our society and economy because we based our future on the people and assets they have, rather than traditional models of development.

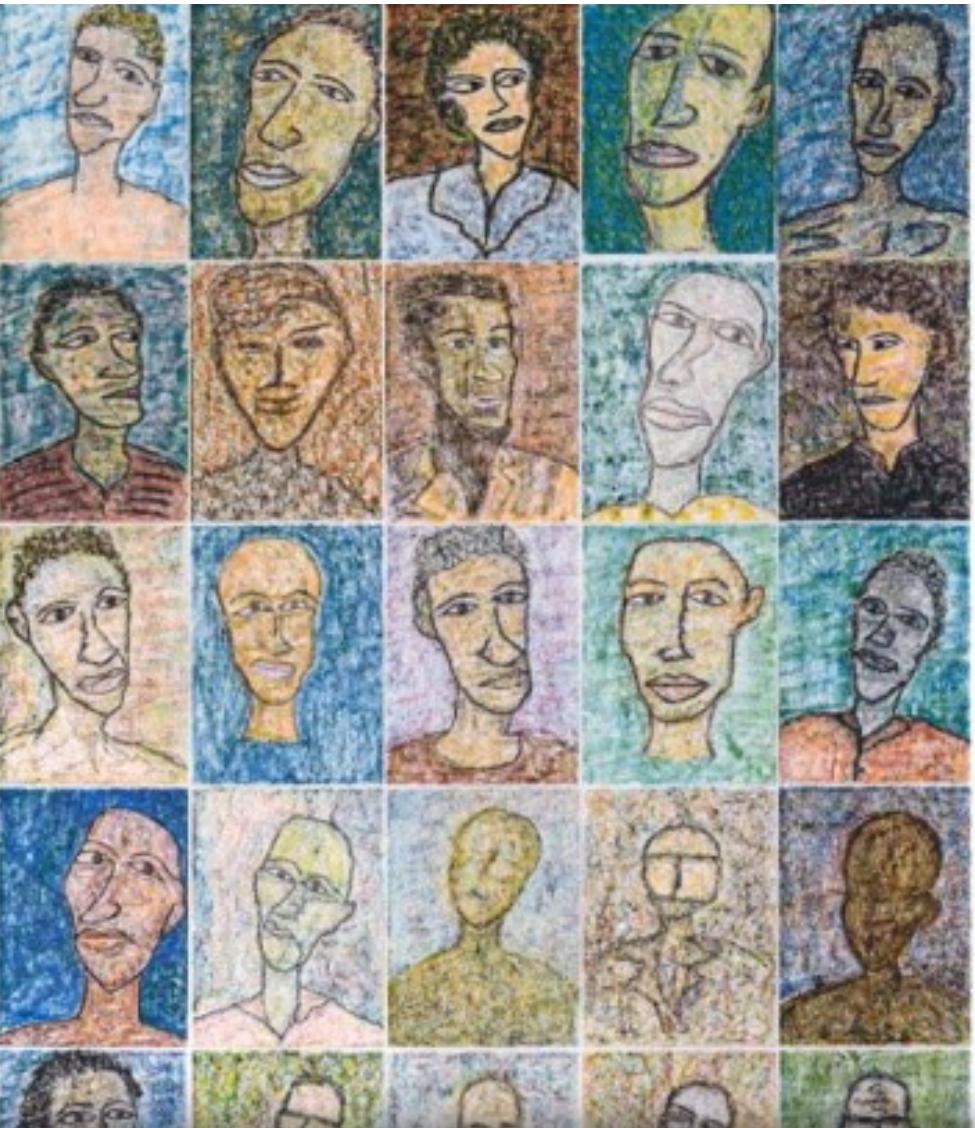
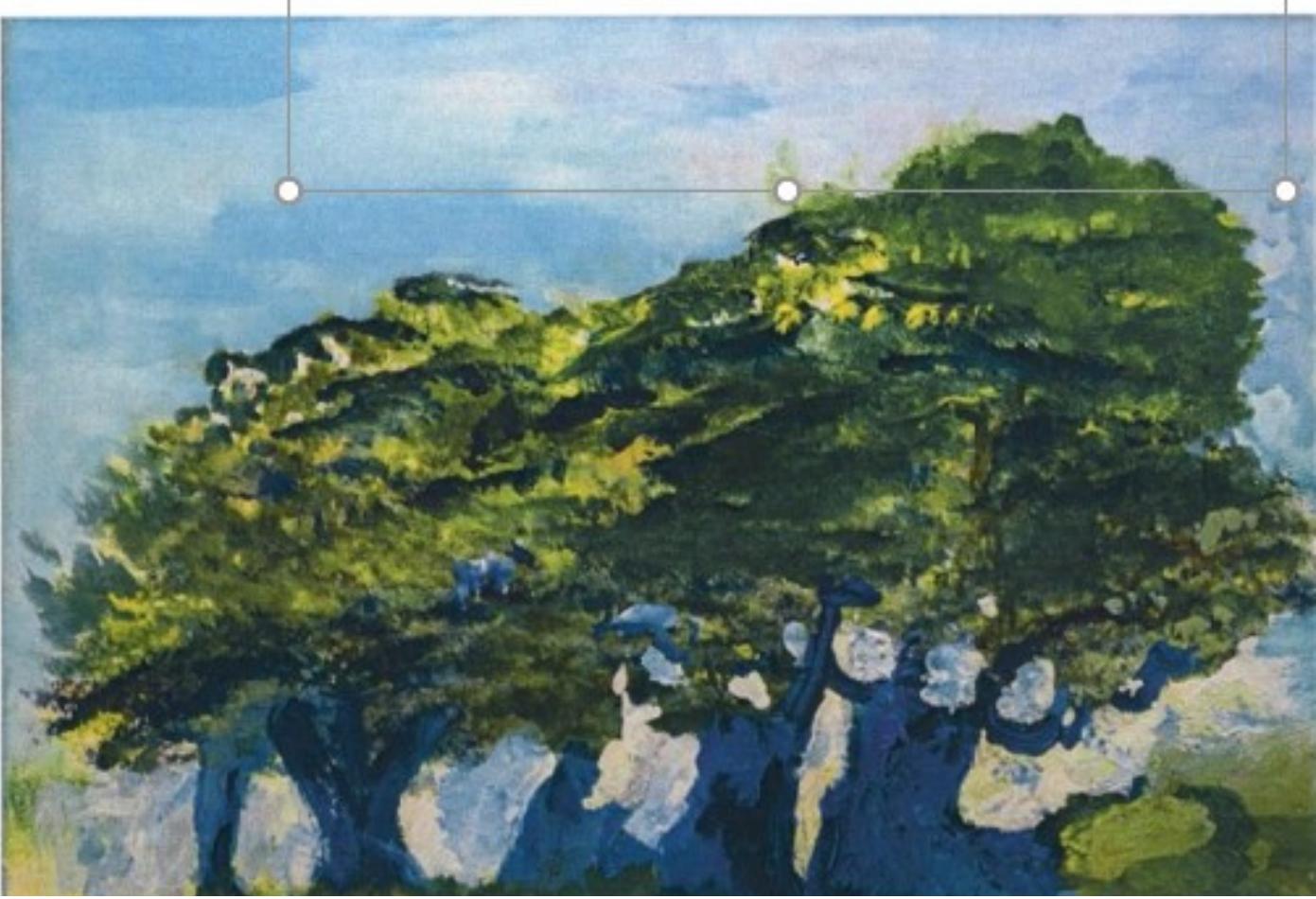
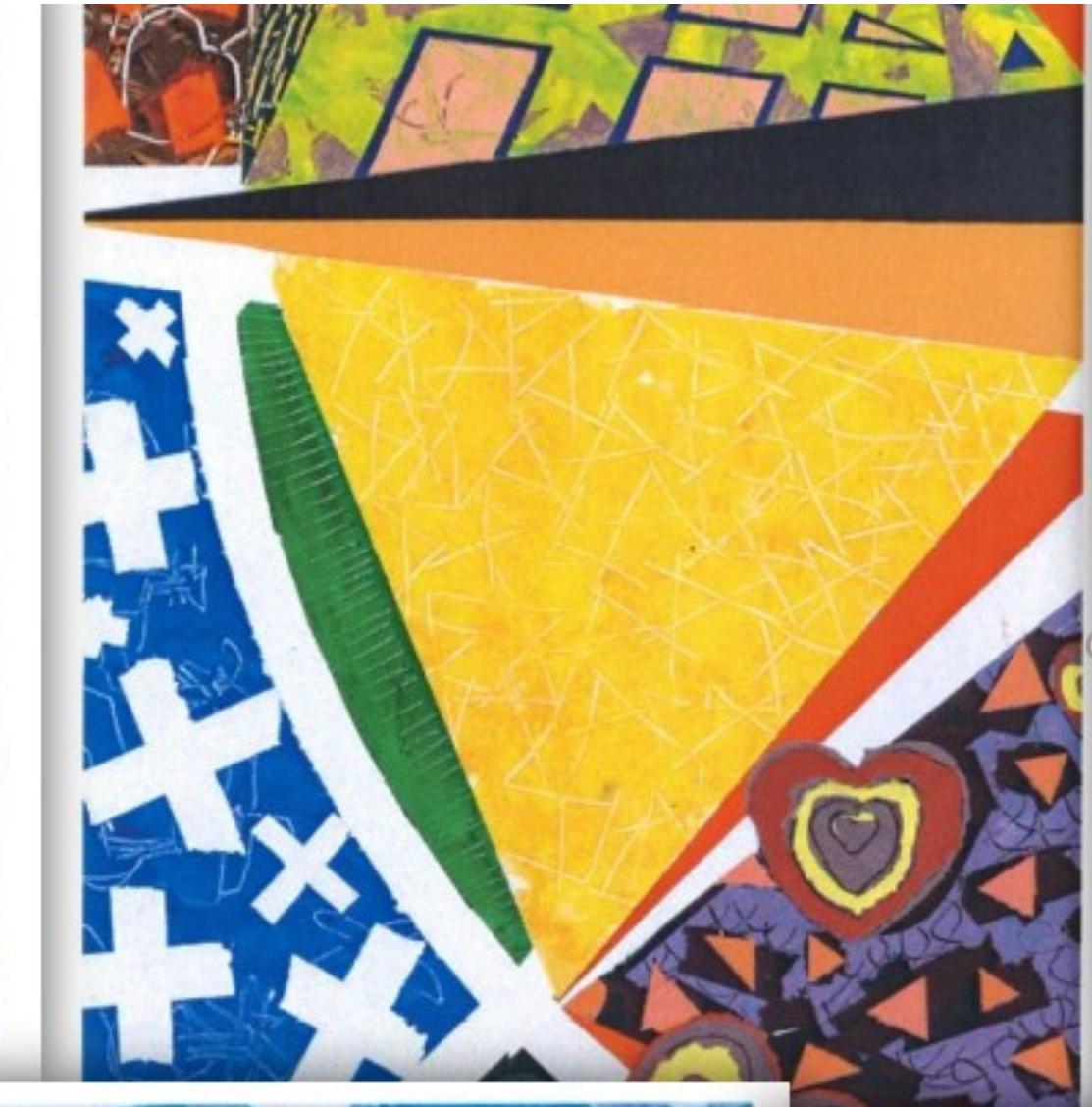
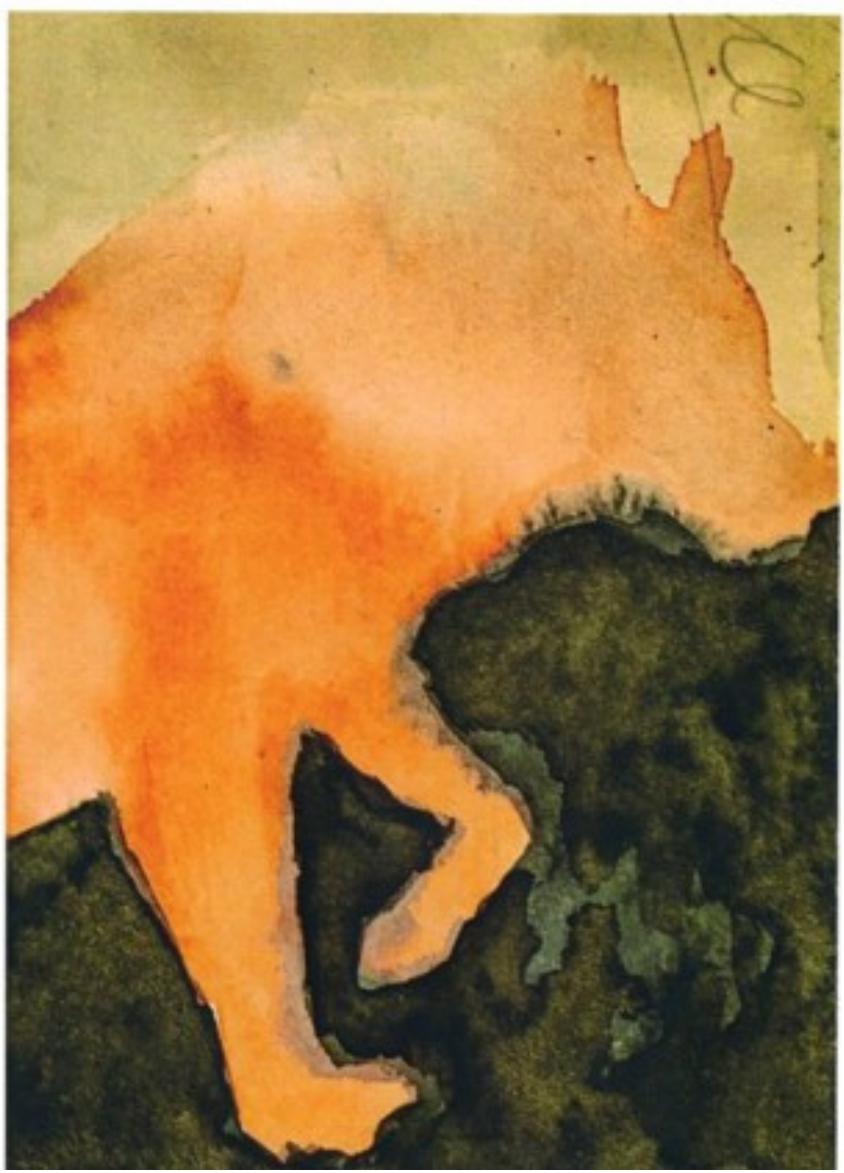
People in the community tell me it took a click to get here but the hard work of many paid off.

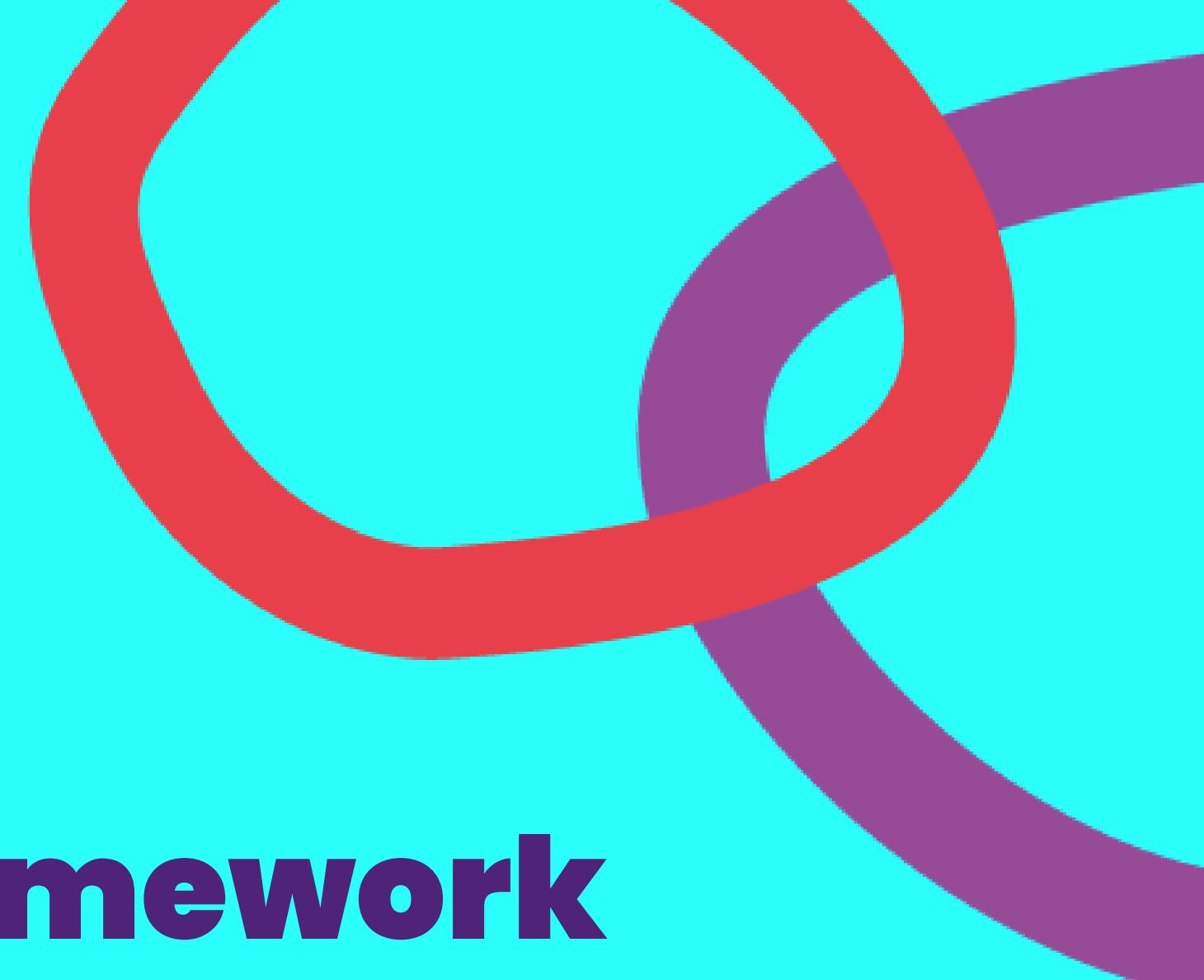
I'm proud that I was able to support this change.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Garrett Clark'.

Postcard designed by Compass Artists 2023







The Four Shifts Framework

Background

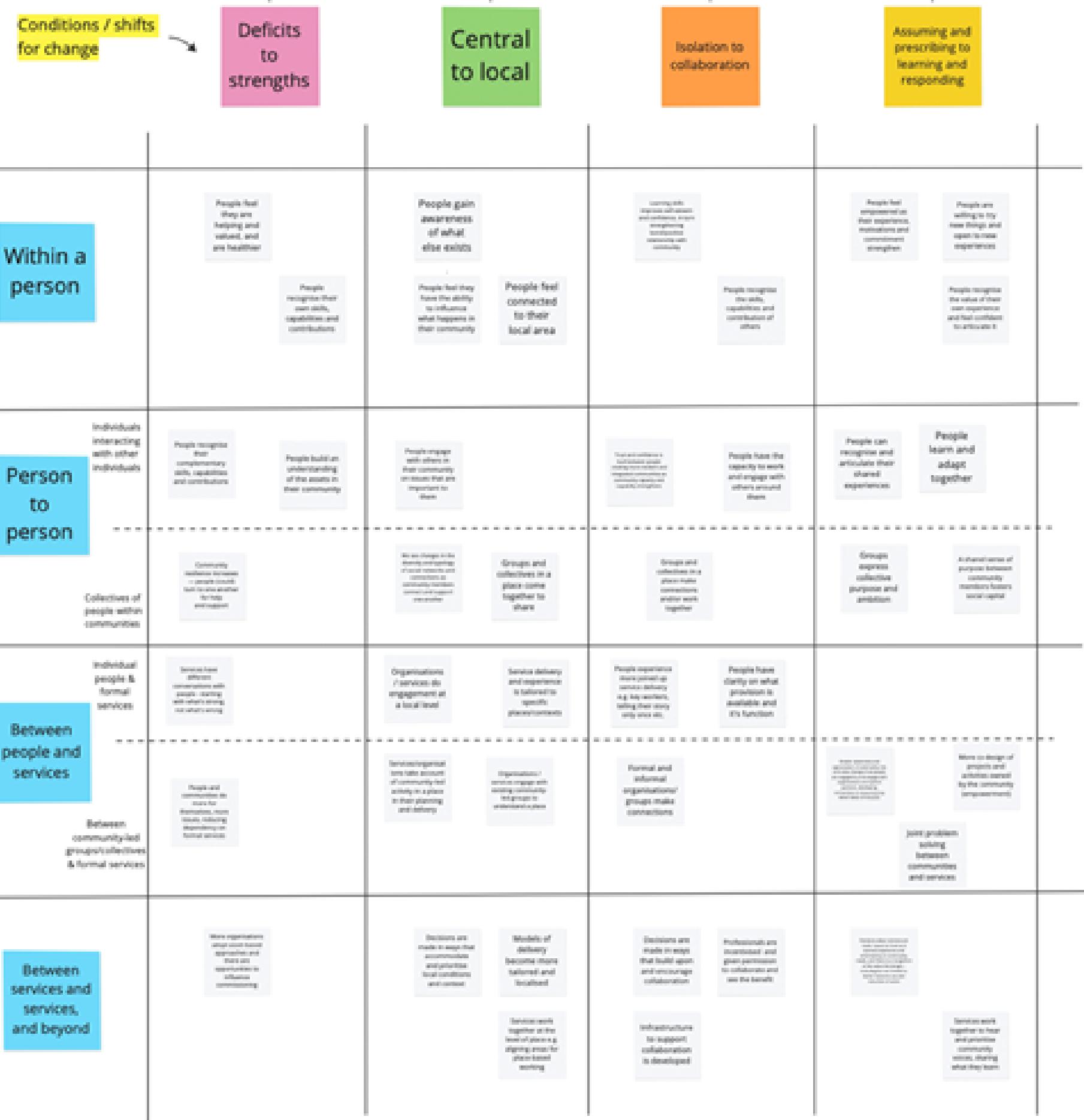
The Four Shifts Framework

The Four Shifts was created by Collaborate CIC to support the evaluation of Making it Happen as a clear and accessible tool to help us to capture and analyse evidence about the change MiH is contributing to for individuals, communities and in the wider system.

Making it Happen is an asset-based community development programme operating in 5 areas of East Sussex. It is funded by East Sussex County Council and delivered through a partnership of five local VCS organisations:

- 3VA
- Action in Rural Sussex
- Hastings Voluntary Action
- Rother Voluntary Action
- Sussex Community Development Association

Community development workers work alongside people to build on the positive things happening where they live and build the relationships, connections and networks that will contribute to positive change.



The Four Shifts

The key components of the framework are:

- The four shifts (along the top)
- The four levels (down the side)
- The indicators (on white squares in the boxes)

The Four Shifts

Deficits to strengths

- From focusing purely on needs and deficits to consideration of the strengths and assets that are already present

Central to local

- From central 'one size fits all' type responses to locally defined solutions and action

Isolation to collaboration

- From isolation and silo working to collaboration across different actors and organisations

Assuming and prescribing to listening and responding

- From pre-determining what people need or offering a 'set menu' of options, to deep listening and co-production

The Four Levels

Within a person

- Changes in how an individual person behaves or perceives themselves

Person to person

- Changes in how individuals interact with other individuals in their community
- Changes in how collectives of people within communities interact, behave or perceive themselves

Between people and services

- Changes in how individual people and formal services interact
- Changes between how community-led groups/collectives and formal services interact

Between services and services, and beyond

- Changes in how formal services and the wider system interact with each other and the community

Example Indicators

People feel they have the ability to influence what happens in their community

Within a person

People engage with others in their community on issues that are important to them

Person to person

Organisations / services engage with existing community-led groups to understand a place

Between people and services

Decisions are made in ways that accommodate and prioritise local conditions and context

Between services and services

From Central to Local

The Four Shifts - an opportunity for wider application?

Although the Four Shifts framework was developed for Making it Happen, it draws on wider literature about ABCD and systems change.

We think it could have wider relevance beyond the programme and could make a contribution to articulating a collective ambition to support and extend asset-based ways of working in East Sussex – which many people (not just Making it Happen) are working towards.

The Four Shifts - learning so far

We've seen the greatest evidence of change related to:

Change within individuals

- Increases in report self-confidence, self-esteem and a growing sense of purpose and belonging
- Taking on leadership roles within community activities
- Lifestyle changes such as exercising more, and socialising more

Changes in how people interact with each other, the place and sense of local community

- People feeling joy together and build new skills
- Making new connections or deepening existing relationships, beyond the bounds of MiH activities
- A wider sense of their community and what it means to be part of something bigger than themselves
- More physical spaces and community assets coming into community use or ownership

Planning the event

Four Shifts - Planning the Event

Representatives from three East Sussex based community organisations – Transition Town Hastings, Compass Community Arts and Hospitable Environment – joined forces with representatives from East Sussex Community Voice, Care for the Carers, East Sussex County Council, NHS Sussex, Making it Happen and Collaborate CIC to plan and host the event.

Our goal was to co-design the event to create a space in which people could reflect, learn and build relationships and a common sense of purpose about how to encourage positive collective change. Over the course of three months between September and November 2023 the group met to plan and shape the event.

The event took place at the View Hotel in Eastbourne on Monday 27th November 2023. 64 people were in attendance, which included 9 members of the Making it Happen Team and 2 colleagues from Collaborate CIC.

Acknowledgements

Huge thanks to all the members of the Four Shifts Co-design group including:

- Fanya Sharkey – Compass Community Arts
- Sherry Clark – Transition Town Hastings and Gardening Our Streets
- Lizzie Lower – Hospitable Environment
- Eleanor Johnson-Bullock – Hospitable Environment
- Miriam Wilkinson – Care for the Carers
- Veronica Kirwan – East Sussex Community Voice
- Paul Rideout – East Sussex County Council
- Kay Muir – NHS Sussex
- Laura Heales – Action in Rural Sussex and Making it Happen
- Angie Greany – Sussex Community Development Association and Making it Happen
- Ellen Care – Collaborate CIC

We owe particular thanks to Fanya and the artists from Compass Community Arts who created all the beautiful materials, examples of which are shared here.