Making it Happen Programme:
A Realist Evaluation

Full Version Annual Report 2021 to 2022

[Please see the executive summary and report summaries for shorter versions of the evaluation and findings]

Authors: Dr Kevin Harris, Chad Oatley and Claire Russell from the Centre for Health and Realist Research Partnership

'Bringing Making it Happen to Life' case studies: contributed by the Making it Happen Team

Contents Page

Contents

Introduction 4
Where We Started 4
Where We Are 4
Where We Are Heading, ... 4
What is ABCD? – A brief description 4
Making it Happen programme introduction 5
Snapshot of the evaluation approach 5
The Making it Happen Programme Evaluation 5
The Realist Evaluation Approach 6
1. Developing a Programme Theory 7
2. Testing Programme Theories 8
3. Refining a Programme Theory 10
Promoting Collaboration and the Realist Evaluation of Making it Happen 11
The Core Evaluation Phases 13
Evaluation: Phase 1 14
Where We Started: Taking Realist Evaluation Forward in Making it Happen 14
Introductory comment 14
Step 1: Conducting a literature review of Asset-based Community Development 14
Step 2: Stakeholder Mapping and Interviews 14
Step 3: Engaging with Community Development Workers through the Evaluation and Learning Groups (ELGs) and Operational Delivery Team (ODT) Meetings 15
Step 4: Prioritising and Agreeing Programme Theories 17
Evaluation: Phase 2 20
Where We Are At: Testing the Making it Happen Programme Theories 20
Introductory Comment 20
Methods 24
The How and why conversation (Community and Development Workers Interviews with Community Members) 24
The How and why conversation (Community and Development Workers Focus Groups with Community Members) 24
Surveys 24
Case Studies of Making it Happen Assets 25
Findings: Testing and Refining the Making it Happen Programme Theories 26
Programme Theory Testing and Refinement Analyses: In Detail 26

Exploration of the Emerging Survey Findings 51
Bringing Making it Happen to Life Through Case Study Examples of the Assets in the Partnership Areas 57
Programme Theory Testing and Refinement Analyses: A Summary that draws the data collected from all the methods together 66
Where We Are Heading to: Key learning, reflections, implications, recommendations and next steps..... 73
Key learning, reflections and implications from Phase 1 and Phase 2..... 73
Recommendations 74
Next Steps 75
Appendices of Collaboratively Co-produced Outputs..... 77
Appendix 1: Community Member Survey (Iteration 1: The Longer Survey Version)..... 77
Appendix 2: Community Member Survey (Iteration 1: The Shorter Survey Version)..... 78
Appendix 3: Community Development Worker Learning Programme – Example of a Session Outcomes Survey..... 79
Appendix 4: Information Sheet and Consent Form..... 80
Appendix 5: Making it Happen Small Sparks Grant Application Form..... 81
Appendix 6: Making it Happen Small Sparks Grant Review Format 82
Appendix 7: ELG: How and Why Conversation Template 83
Appendix 8: ELG: Asset Mapping Template for Realist Evaluation Purposes 84
Appendix 9: Making it Happen Literature Synthesis..... 85
Appendix 10: Making it Happen Plain Speaking Programme Theory Presentation..... 86
Appendix 11: How and Why Training Slides..... 87
Appendix 12: Community Development Worker Learning Programme - Initial Session Outcomes 88

Introduction

We are excited to write, and share, our first report on the evaluation of Making it Happen. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress made by the Centre for Health and Realist Research (CHRR) in evaluating Making it Happen and share the key findings from the evaluation so far. With the purpose in mind, the intended audience for this report is any person who has an interest in understanding how Making it Happen is being evaluated, and what outcomes have occurred through Making it Happen so far, and how and why that is. To achieve this, the report is structured in a way to inform and allow the reader to follow this journey from Where We Started, to Where We Are, and Where We are Heading to.

Where We Started, provides a walk-through of how we have taken forward the first phase of the evaluation in practice to complete key evaluation processes and activities over the past year to develop what is referred to as a Programme Theory for Making it Happen. It is important to remember that the evaluation began in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic, where government guidance represented unprecedented levels of social restrictions that were applied to every community across the UK. This continued until February 2022, when the government removed the last of the restrictions that were listed on the pandemic roadmap to recovery. Making it Happen stakeholders have referred to the pandemic throughout the evaluation and this is reflected in this report. Making it Happen showed a proactive and dynamic adaptation within the social restriction guidance wherever possible and this is also reflected from the outset of where we started to where we are currently with the evaluation.

Where We Are, covers what we have been doing from Developing the Programme Theory for Making it Happen to test it. This section of the reports includes an outline of the methods we have used to capture both qualitative and quantitative data, and how it has been supported in collaboration with a range of key stakeholders through a range of activities and processes. We proceed to present refined programme theories for Making it Happen based on the evidence captured and synthesised. By refined programme theories, this is where we are sharing the key primary findings from our evaluation so far about how and why Making it Happen is working [or not] to generate the outcomes we have prioritised to focus on for this phase of the evaluation.

Where We Are Heading, follows what we will be doing next as we continue to test and refine theories, and introduce new methods for collecting data to evaluate more of Making it Happen. Finally, this section of the report is informed by some recommendations based on our reflections in evaluating Making it Happen so far, with the intention to enhance how we evaluate and use data going forward together.

What is ABCD? – A brief description

Asset-based Community Development (ABCD hereon) was first introduced by Kretzmann and McKnight in 1993. ABCD is based upon an approach for how to get people, community associations and local organisations to collaborate and act on things they care about and want to change e.g., tackling homelessness, food waste or increasing physical activity. This is driven by the belief that most communities address social and economic problems with only a small amount of their total capacity. ABCD operates under the premise that communities can drive development themselves by identifying, making visible and mobilising assets (this can be individual skills and expertise, physical and financial resources) that can strengthen existing, and create new, opportunities for positive change(s). Hence, a core component in defining the application of ABCD is within a geographically determined place where people live, grow, work, travel between, and age; meaning ABCD engages with 'communities' within a geographical community/place.

Interest towards ABCD in the UK mushroomed in 2010, and has been driven by Public Health, and other health and care service areas, who have drawn connections between how ABCD can enhance an individual's coherence to access, build and utilise 'health' assets within communities. In addition to how it is possible to identify, and strengthen, factors and (re)sources within communities which create health and enable people to live and stay well; protected from exposure to risks of illness and causes of ill-health.

Making it Happen programme introduction

The Making it Happen programme is funded by East Sussex County Council. The programme partners, who are voluntary organisations based in the county are Sussex Community Development Association (Lewes District), Action in Rural Sussex (Wealden), Rother Voluntary Action (Rother District), Hastings Voluntary Action (Hastings) and 3VA (Eastbourne).

Making it Happen (MiH) is about discovering, celebrating and building on the positive things in local neighbourhoods. Each of the MiH partners has a small team of Community Development Workers who work with people, bringing them together to make the most of opportunities that exist to create positive change. The perspective of Making it Happen is that it is known that things like having a good social support network; being part of a group; or feeling connected with your neighbours can be positive for our health and wellbeing.

The key underlying assumption is that by adopting asset-based community development, there is the potential to enhance the ability of individuals and communities to create or sustain health and wellbeing through positive impacts on the psychosocial factors that contribute to the distribution of health outcomes.

Making it Happen doesn't deliver activities or make changes for people. It is about working with them to create the changes they want to make for themselves and their neighbours. The aim is to improve the general health and wellbeing of people living in the neighbourhoods where Making it Happen is working. The programme currently runs in neighbourhoods and five districts and boroughs located across the county.

Snapshot of the evaluation approach

The Making it Happen Programme Evaluation

By working within two initial phases, the evaluation was trying to understand whether Making it Happen works, how it works, under what circumstances it works and why. Making it Happen commissioned a realist evaluation to address these key questions. These key questions are answered through two stages of evaluation: the first stage began with developing theories of how and why Making it Happen Works. Working in collaboration with key stakeholders, we conducted a realist review of available literature, forming 8 programme theories for testing. Following theory development, we moved to testing the programme theories, focusing in this report on theories 1-4. Working collaboratively, we tested theories 1-4 through How and Why conversations with Making it Happen beneficiaries. The findings of these conversations, supplemented by Making it Happen case studies and survey, provide a better understanding of how Making it Happen works and why.

The Realist Evaluation Approach

The evaluation of Making It Happen follows what is known as a Realist Evaluation approach. Realist Evaluation aims to explain how and why outcomes came about within complex programmes like Making it Happen. Realist Evaluation helps evaluators and wider stakeholders explore more deeply to surface how people, communities, and wider stakeholders from a range of organisations respond to resources provided within programmes like Making it Happen to uncover 'what works for whom, in what circumstances, and how and why'. To achieve this, it is important to understand how people (such as MiH beneficiaries) respond to and act on resources (such as opportunities provided by MiH) to generate and enact change.

A realist evaluation will often identify multiple potential explanations as to what is causing change to occur, including factors which are often beyond the control of the programme. As MiH operates across different contexts and areas of East Sussex, a realist evaluation has the potential identify many of the ways in which MiH contributes to and influences communities to drive development themselves through asset-based community development [ABCD]. In short, a realist evaluation provides a theoretical exploration of the actual practices of MiH beneficiaries in East Sussex communities.

Realist Evaluation follows three key phases of developing programme theories, testing programme theories, and then refining programme theories. The term 'theory' in the context of Realist Evaluation refers to the assumptions, beliefs, goals and explanatory thinking underpinning the overarching structure of a programme and how it is put into practice. These three key phases are summarised below.

1. Developing a Programme Theory

- Review local documentation and literature, in addition to undertaking interviews with a range of people involved in the delivery or impacted by Making it Happen to speculate how and why MiH might or might not work.
- Outcome: Eight programme were identified as important and impactful theories for MiH –the focus of this report is on programme theories 1-4.

2. Testing Programme Theories

- Using a range of methods (e.g., surveys, interviews, focus groups and case studies) programme theories were tested in exploring MiH beneficiary's insights, judgments and experiences to inform understanding of how and why MiH does (or does not) work, for whom, and why.
- Outcome: Programme theories 1-4 were tested through interviews, focus groups and surveys to support the current understanding and analyses of how and why MiH works, for whom, and why.

3. Refining Programme Theories

- Working with Community Development Workers, the data was also analysed to undercover new insights and observations of how and why theorized outcomes were (or were not) achieved.
- Outcome: Four refined programme theories were identified which provided a better understanding of how and why MiH works, for whom it works and the impact of MiH for beneficiaries in East Sussex.

1. Developing a Programme Theory

This phase entailed reviewing existing literature, local documentation, and conducting interviews with a range of people who are involved in the delivery, or work with, Making it Happen, or could be impacted by it. The purpose of these activities was to develop 'theories'; explanations about how, and why, Making it Happen, might work [or not] in the communities it is being taken forward within, and who for.

What we did

- Conducted a realist review of ABCD based on academic and grey literature available. The premise of a realist review, which can vary from a typical literature review, is to develop programme theories to unpack and explain how, why and in what settings complex interventions (such as MiH) do [or do not] work. Realist reviews do not necessarily require a comprehensive, exhaustive search for relevant literature; rather, the aim here was to sample available literature and achieve modest forms of theoretical generalisability from available evidence.
- We focused on identifying and including evaluation of ABCD, so we had evidence of outcomes which occurred through ABCD in practice in different contexts. In total we selected and reviewed 12 papers identified as most relevant to East Sussex. Additionally, at 12 papers we had reached realist saturation, wherein no new candidate programme theories were emerging. All key stakeholders, including the Making it Happen programme partners and Academic Advisory Group (AAG) members were invited to contribute to this process by sharing any published papers with the evaluation team, in addition to the online and library searches that were being performed by the team. When completed, the review was shared with all partners and the AAG members upon completion in 2021.
- Conducted interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders associated with Making it Happen across East Sussex. These interviews/focus groups intended to extract from participants their assumptions and beliefs about Making it Happen, and why they hold the views they had. This was important for providing context from those actively involved with MiH, who could provide detailed and nuanced information that might otherwise be missed. In total we conducted 16 interviews.
- Synthesised the data from the review of literature and the interviews/focus groups to generate initial programme theories which represented the overall programme of Making it Happen i.e. the different ways in which it can work to generate changes in a range of outcomes at different levels (i.e. individual, community, and across the system).
- Shared the Programme Theory for Making it Happen back with aforementioned key stakeholders who informed the development of it for feedback and checked that it is representative of their collective views.
- Conducted a prioritisation process with a small group of stakeholders responsible for managing the evaluation of Making it Happen. This resulted in the collective prioritising of eight programme theories to take forward to test devised from collaborative engagement with a wide range of stakeholders (though interviews and meetings), in addition to support from grey literature and the realist review.
- Worked with key stakeholders to inform production of both academic and plain-speaking versions of the Programme Theory for Making it Happen so that it could be shared and used more widely.
- Linked in with the Community Development Workers (CDWs) in a collaborative space to support the development of the 8 programme theories and immerse CHRR into the context of MiH, initially through Evaluation and Learning Groups (ELGs) and latterly through the ODT meetings, fostering meaningful relationships with these key programme stakeholders who were working directly within communities; promoted insight and learning about the MiH evaluation and programme, and exchanged knowledge about the programme and how and why it works.

- Worked collaboratively with the Making it Happen programme manager, a team leader who supported and provided supervision for the Community Development Workers and an external training provider to develop an approach towards evaluating the CDW learning programme[1].

2. Testing Programme Theories

This phase focuses on how we used a range of methods i.e. surveys, interviews, focus groups, and case-studies to generate qualitative and quantitative data to 'test' the theories that have been developed. Critically, this phase was bought forward at the request of SCDA, so that initial findings could be included in this report, in addition to the original intention, to focus upon and report the first phase of the evaluation (programme theory development). Therefore, the data that has been used for programme theory testing has only begun to emerge. Notwithstanding, to test the theories, we captured relevant data [both qualitative and quantitative] to establish what the outcomes are, whom for, how the outcomes occurred through Making it Happen, and why that is, as far as can be known at this stage of the evaluation.

What we did -

- Collaboratively agreed with stakeholders responsible for the management of the evaluation of Making it Happen to split the testing of the eight prioritised programme theories into two phases. Phase 1 [findings presented within this report], focused on testing Programme Theories 1-4, as these were theories more closely associated to outcomes for individuals and communities as a result of being involved in, or impacted by, Making it Happen within their community. In commencing this evaluation, it was agreed that focusing on programme theories 1-4 was appropriate in exploring the provisional findings associated with outcomes which emerged from this work.
- Phase 2 [following this report], would focus on testing Programme Theories 5-8, whose outcomes are more closely associated to effect changes across partner organisations or parts of the system, and the ripple-effect this has on people and communities. Comparatively, programme theories 5-8 aimed to explore more of the ways organisational stakeholders make sense of Making it Happen, and how these individuals embedded Making it Happen in their work.
- Developed an evaluation framework in collaboration with Making it Happen staff to provide a plan for the methods we used to test Programme Theories 1-4 and incorporated routinely captured data into the evaluation. This data has been incorporated into this evaluation through close contact with SCDA, through the SCDA's quarterly monitoring reports and as showcased in this report through the presented case studies.
- Worked with Making it Happen staff to involve them in assisting data collection through the methods agreed to build their capacity to do evaluation and enhance the quality of data we were able to capture.
- All the Making it Happen partners participated in coordinating interviews (How and Why conversations – see appendix 11) with key MiH beneficiaries across East Sussex. A sample of MiH beneficiaries available to us participated in a total of fourteen interviews, which took place with Community Development Workers either shadowing or leading the interviews. Importantly, as this data was collected as part of the very first experiences of Community Development Workers gathering information through the 'how and why conversations', representation across the neighbourhoods, districts and boroughs has not yet been achieved.

[1] The CDW learning programme was established towards the end of last year and is ongoing. The findings are beginning to emerge and a brief snapshot of them are reported here, though will be focused upon in more detail as the work continues. The Making it Happen programme manager and team leader have worked with the evaluation team to draw upon the early findings in real-time and to disseminate them to the relevant audiences.

- Focus group discussions (How and Why conversations) took place with key MiH beneficiaries across East Sussex. Fourteen people took part in three focus groups. Focus groups were offered as a method of gathering group responses when community members were interested in gathering as a group to speak with Community Development Workers and/or the evaluator. As in the interviews, MiH beneficiaries spoke freely and candidly, providing their subjective view and insight. The focus groups did not have an alternative focus to the interviews, nor did they seek alternative data or insight to the interviews.
- All participants in both interviews and focus groups were purposively sampled from MiH beneficiaries available to us, identified by the Community Development Workers. This sampling strategy allowed for the Community Development Workers to identify participants known to them, which was beneficial both given the time-sensitive nature of this project and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to acknowledged that purposive sampling is open to subjective biases, particularly in selecting participants; however, we believe that the how and why conversations reflected a fair representation of MiH beneficiaries across all target neighbourhoods identified. Community Development Workers were integral to engaging MiH beneficiaries, particularly those from marginalised communities. The relationships that Community Development Workers developed within the community were key to our sampling strategy, allowing for a strong representation of marginalised communities, a variety of MiH beneficiary ages and people with protected characteristics.
- We acknowledge the small sample sizes for both interview and focus groups, given the 17 target neighbourhoods associated with MiH. The numbers are small at the current time as this work is ongoing; initially, it was our intention to undertake the focus groups, interviews and survey at a later data, with the intention of continued data collection informing our understanding. Additionally, there were further challenges (including the COVID-19 pandemic) which limited the quantity of data that we could collect, in addition to the number of MiH beneficiaries we could engage. However, we feel that we have maintained a balance through these insights, providing contextually rich detail and depth of understanding from a small number of interviews and focus groups, which might otherwise be overshadowed by a larger, more generalised sample of participants. Lastly, it is possible to build on these insights provided through further interviews and focus groups, refining understanding as new information comes to light.
- An initial Community Member survey was developed collaboratively with the Making it Happen programme manager, with the aim of capturing additional data through supplemental methods. The coproduction of the survey represented an opportunity to work with key stakeholders to develop an approach to gather information about community member experiences and perspectives about the ABCD activity and the Making it Happen programme. It was piloted briefly at the end of some of the focus groups and interview conversations with community members. Whilst the survey will be developed further over time, fifteen responses were analysed in time for inclusion in this report. This initial survey was viewed as an exploratory step to see if community members would engage with Community Development Workers and the key Making it Happen partner organisations, through completion of the survey. If this was possible, the plan was to build in further questions around programme theory testing and to integrate community wellbeing and resilience questions and/or to use external tools such the Place Standard Tool (https://www.placestandard.scot/guide/quick).
- Collaborated with the Making it Happen programme manager and team leader who developed a series of case studies to contribute to evidencing the programme theories in real-world contexts of the Making it Happen programme.

3. Refining a Programme Theory

This phase was not entirely separate from the 'testing' phase of a realist evaluation, as this phase focused on how we make sense of the data that we accumulate through the testing phase of the evaluation to refine the theories produced in the developing phase. To do this, we analysed and combined [referred to as synthesised] data to scrutinise how the activities and processes of Making it Happen were taken forward within a particular community, leading to the outcome(s) captured for certain groups of people/individuals [or not]. This helped to confirm, refine, or refute, the initial programme theories based on the evidence generated during the testing phase. From the refining phase, this can lead to developing new theories to be tested in subsequent phases of the evaluation.

What we did -

- Having conducted the How and Why conversations, we worked collaboratively with Community Development Workers to identify key How and Why elements emerging from the programme theories, consistent with realist evaluation methods.
- We analysed data from the methods utilised to test programme theories using thematic analysis. This method involved the use of inductive and deductive logic where handwritten descriptive codes were used on the How and Why conversation documents, to identify and explain observations as to 'how' and 'why' the participants explained which outcomes were (or were not) achieved. For audience members who are interested in this analytical approach, further information can be located via the reference link from the Rameses project (URL: https://www.ramesesproject.org/media/RAMESES_II_Retroduction.pdf).
- We uncovered new insights (as above) which were used to refine programme theories 1-4.
- We presented refined programme theories (within this report and through the collaborative spaces that were coordinated with support from the Making it Happen programme manager).

Promoting Collaboration and the Realist Evaluation of Making it Happen

To enhance how we take the Realist Evaluation forward within Making it Happen, we believed that if the evaluation processes and activities across the three phases of the Realist Evaluation were collaborative, that is they engage and involve a diverse range of stakeholders in helping to shape, decide on, and support aspects of the evaluation, it could enhance the quality, value, and use, of the evaluation findings in practice, and alter stakeholders perceptions of evaluation.

To guide how we did this, and will continue to do so, we adopted a set of evidence-based interrelated principles (see Figure 1) for guiding collaboration in evaluation amongst key stakeholders involved in, or close to, Making It Happen.

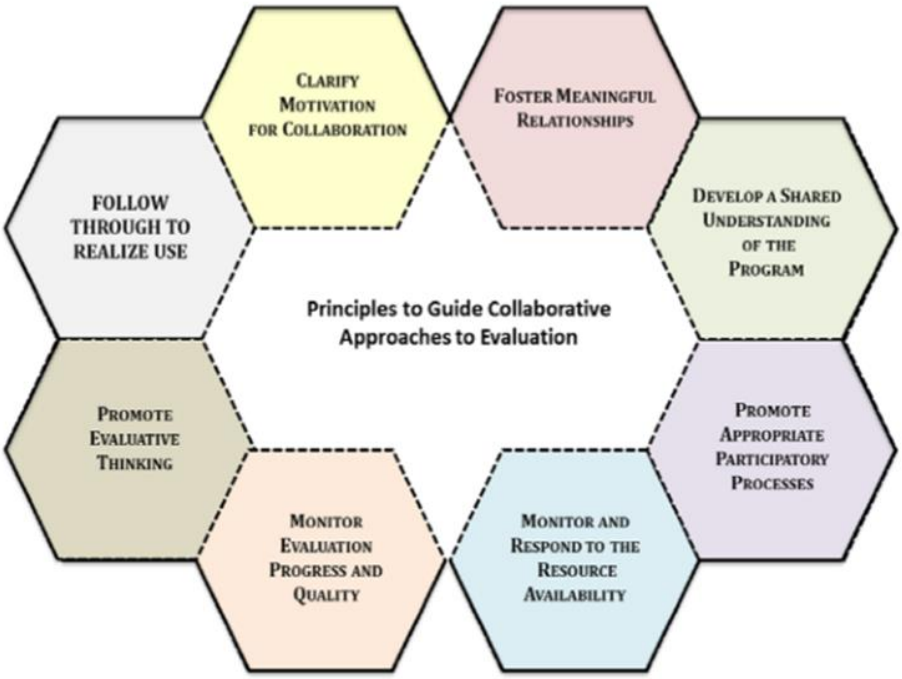


Figure 1. Shulha et al's (2016) Collaborative Approaches to Evaluation Principles

This approach outlines eight key principles which acted as steppingstones for enhancing the collaborative involvement of stakeholders throughout an evaluation and integrate evaluation within local conditions. The aim was to enhance the use of evaluation and evaluation findings by stakeholders. The first step was to build meaningful relationships with people through discussions. This enabled the evaluation team to take the next step and understand the different motivations amongst people to collaborate, and engage, in evaluation. We used this information and incorporated it into the evaluation planning phases for both developing and testing programme theories, so we could:

1. Establish the evaluation capacity building needs of those involved. For example, the stakeholder capacity building needs were expressed as a motivation to learn more about realist methods and thinking, with a motivation toward understanding and implementing how and why conversations; and to:
2. Identify appropriate participatory opportunities for different stakeholders involved in relation to the motivations, needs, and interests, and promote evaluative thinking;
3. Encourage the 'use' of evaluation to support continuous improvement and learning amongst stakeholders; and
4. Determine how best to monitor evaluation progress and quality throughout the duration of the evaluation.

Combining collaborative principles to evaluation within the phases of doing a Realist Evaluation, means we could involve stakeholders in evaluation processes, activities, and decisions. This could help us to generate more meaningful and valuable evaluation, and data from evaluation, and in doing so, also support people to do and use evaluation findings to inform the ongoing delivery of the programme moving forward.

In order to foster a collaborative environment, we engaged in several approaches and methods that sought to bring the evaluation closer to the real world of stakeholders engaged in MiH. This was important to firstly ensure that as evaluators CHRR understood the dynamics of the programme and wider contexts influencing MiH. Secondly, it was important to ensure that stakeholders understood the realist approach and what the evaluation consisted of. These environments are briefly summarised below:

Evaluation and Learning Groups (ELGS)

The creation of an ELG infrastructure was an important part of phase 1 and 2.1 of the evaluation. These groups were formed as part of the evaluation (so they did not pre-exist, prior to the evaluation commencing). ELGs were intended to be collaborative spaces where different stakeholders within the programme and evaluation came together to actively discuss and reflect around evidence. The intention behind the ELGs was for CHRR to learn more about MiH in East Sussex and bring the Community Development Workers from MiH into the dynamics of the evaluation. A key driver in this instance was to break down barriers and knowledge impasses surrounding who was doing the evaluation and why. If key stakeholders (in this case, the Community Development Workers) were aware of the realist approach and what it served to achieve, this would lead to greater coherence between the key stakeholders and the evaluation team. Within the context of MiH, 3 ELGs were created and operationalised throughout 2021 which were intended to rotate between evaluators in each subsequent year. This infrastructure brought together Community Development Workers who were working across the MiH programme to learn about CHRR's approach to the evaluation and explore ideas of innovation to bring the evaluation into day to day practice. The Community Development Workers were arguably the key connection with community members within the Making it Happen programme and this is why they were keenly focused upon. This gave CHRR an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of what was occurring on the ground. Initially, we began with Community Development Workers in the ELGs and not wider stakeholders as we aimed to develop and build relationships with wider stakeholders throughout the course of the evaluation. It was our intention to consider widening the engagement of the ELGs to include wider stakeholders later on as the earlier attempts of the evaluation team to have wider stakeholders join or form ELG groups was not collectively taken forward as a workable idea within the core group meetings. Our original idea was that eventually, we would have different stakeholders, such as the Academic Advisory Group, community members and strategically involved stakeholders all belong to Evaluation and Learning Groups. Eventually, the Evaluation and Learning Groups were 'paused' and the evaluation team was informed that opportunities to engage with Community Development Workers could happen in Operational Delivery Team meetings as an alternative approach.

MiH Core group

The Core group was a collaborative space that brought together CHRR and wider strategic and operational stakeholders. Within the core group (supported by a terms of reference) this served as a collaborative environment where we would agree on the direction of the evaluation and explain specific terms.

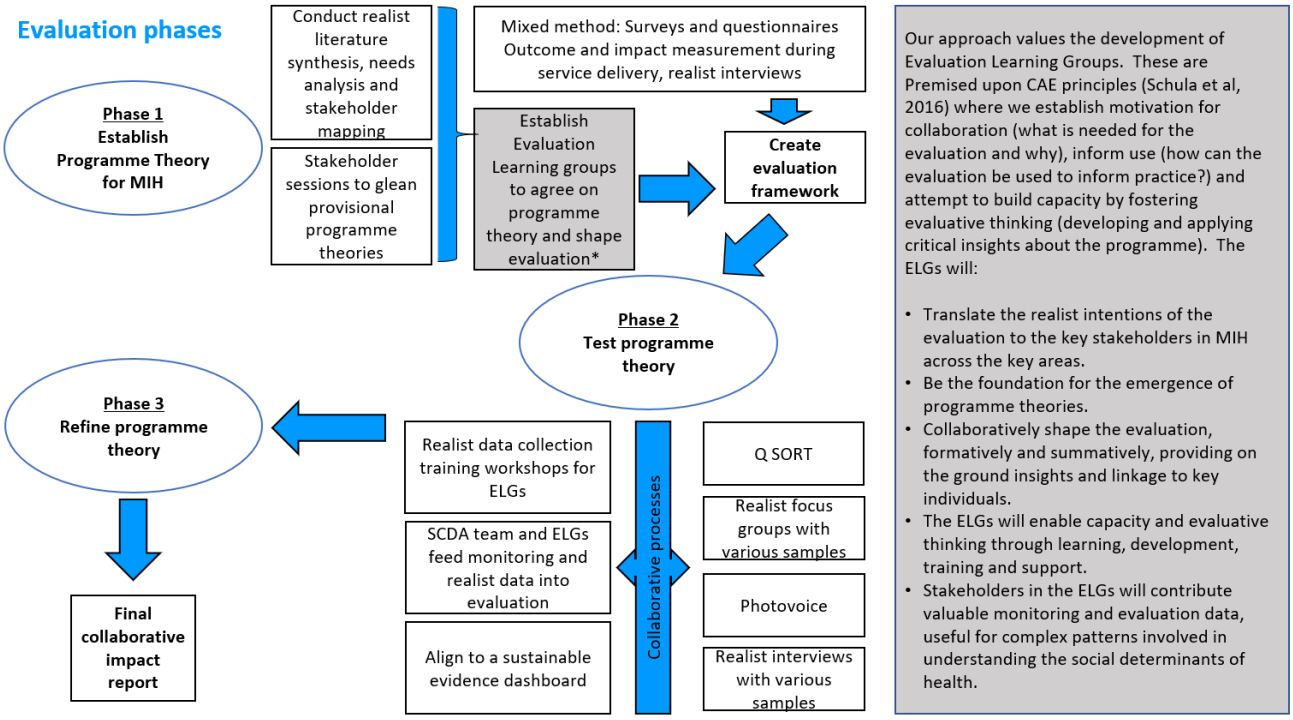
MiH Operational Delivery Team

This was a pre-existing forum chaired by SCDA to support the twelve Community Development Workers (CDWs) working across East Sussex. In these spaces CHRR planned to be able to engage to present the direction of the evaluation and provide training and support around the evaluation. The ODTs met on a regular basis to share learning and develop practice. One of the key opportunities for the ODT was to drive the development of a wider community of ABCD practice. The ODT have successfully teamed with an outside training partner and have co-developed and co-produced a learning programme based on the needs and interests identified within the group. In December 2021, the ELG format for Community Development Workers moved into this space.

Co-producing programme theory

Whilst informed by the Community Development Workers who worked in communities, we have also worked within the core group and with their identified strategic and operational stakeholders to co-produce the programme theories for Making it Happen. We shared the initial programme theories with the group based on our synthesis of the data we generated in Phase 1 of the evaluation. This helped to refine the initial programme theories so that they were more framed in a language that other colleagues and partners would be familiar with/relate to, and that they were representative of Making it Happen, and therefore contextually informed. This was crucial to the evaluation, as developing the wrong theories could result in testing the wrong things and generating data which was not as useful or meaningful to the programme and stakeholders interested in the evaluation of Making it Happen.

The Core Evaluation Phases



Evaluation: Phase 1

Where We Started: Taking Realist Evaluation Forward in Making it Happen

Introductory comment

This section of the report provides a walk-through of the key steps we took to implement our evaluation approach to achieve Phase 1 of the evaluation; to collaboratively develop, then prioritise and agree, a set of programme theories which we then proceeded to test in the next phase of the evaluation. There are multiple ways to develop programme theories about how and why a programme is intended to work. For our evaluation we wanted to put into action several approaches that immersed ourselves into the context of MiH whilst ensuring methodological rigour and limiting methodological biases. These are outlined below:

Step 1: Conducting a literature review of Asset-based Community Development

As appendix 9 illustrates, we started by conducting a literature search for evaluations of Asset-based Community Development [ABCD] to establish the existing evidence which explained how and why ABCD worked to achieve different outcomes. In total, 12 papers were identified as appropriate and included for review. The review of literature follows what is referred to as a Realist Synthesis. This is an approach to reviewing the literature enabled us to extract, and then synthesise, data to develop a series of initial programme theories which help to identify and explain footprints between how ABCD activities and processes taken forward within communities result in specific outcomes occurring, and why[2].

From this synthesis, we identified 46 programme theories which linked the different ways in how ABCD works to result in 22 different types of outcomes at an individual, community, and organisational level[3]. This was a starting point for identifying theories, as is typical in realist evaluation, and the beginning of our collaboration with wider stakeholders. In communicating with wider stakeholders, we all agreed that prioritising a limited number of theories that were most relevant or pertinent to the stakeholders would help the evaluation (and the evaluation audience) to grasp the programme theories and have a clear set of theories ready for testing.

Step 2: Stakeholder Mapping and Interviews

We used the programme theories from Step 1 to develop a set of questions which we used as a guide for our discussions (in small groups or one-to-one) with different stakeholders about MiH. During this step we sought to deepen explanations about what types of outcomes could occur through (MiH) being taken forward, identify any new theories bespoke to Making it Happen and how ABCD was being taken forward within East Sussex, and theories which we could discount because they were not deemed as relevant in relation to Making it Happen.

---

[2] What is a realist synthesis? A realist synthesis focuses on understanding and unpacking the mechanisms by which an intervention works (or fails to work), thereby providing an explanation, as opposed to a judgment about how it works. The realist approach is fundamentally concerned with theory development and refinement, accounting for context as well as outcomes in the process of systematically and transparently synthesizing relevant literature (Rycroft-Malone et al, 2012). The evaluators argued that this is useful because there is currently limited understanding of the mechanisms of action used in approaches that impact on wellbeing, health and resilience within ABCD. Thus, the realist evaluation realist synthesis is suited to the synthesis of evidence about ABCD and the approaches used within Making it Happen.

[3] The output from the Realist Synthesis of Asset-based Community Development can be accessed by contacting the two single points of contact: Angie Greany (Making it Happen programme manager) or Claire Russell (evaluation team). Appendix 9 of this report also contains the realist synthesis.

In total, we conducted 16 [out of 21 invited] interviews with key stakeholders involved in, or close to, MiH and at different levels i.e. community, programme and strategic/system level, and across organisations, sectors and areas of practice to establish the reach of MiH. This also helped to generate an understanding of how different stakeholders across the systems understood, and perceived the value of, Making it Happen within East Sussex. From the interviews, we identified over 100 theories about Making it Happen, including new outcome areas being identified, with a greater consideration to the implementation of ABCD through Making it Happen. It is typical for realist evaluations to begin with many identified theories, which are subsequently narrowed down for testing. Narrowing the theories down for testing was an important part of step 3 (below) through engaging with community development workers to identify priorities.

As an evaluation team, we reviewed, and synthesised, these theories, alongside the literature-informed theories, to produce a candidate set of programme theories for Making it Happen. The candidate programme theories for Making it Happen were shared back to stakeholders who had participated in the initial interviews through a group presentation session. During this session we sought agreement that they were representative of their views and discussed how we could continue to involve or keep informed about the evaluation as we progress with it[4].

Step 3: Engaging with Community Development Workers through the Evaluation and Learning Groups (ELGs) and Operational Delivery Team (ODT) Meetings

To foster a collaborative environment CHRR worked closely with MiH stakeholders to connect and created a coherent approach across the following areas:

- Developed a shared understanding of the programme: Here it was crucial for CHRR to learn and understand what MiH consisted of across the different areas and 12 Community Development Workers which shaped the development of the programme theories.
- Established meaningful professional relationships: Here CHRR valued the evidence that was already in existence (for instance, SCDA's quarterly reports) across the MiH programme. We developed mutual respect through CDW engagement in ELGs and we brought together our realist approach with the monitoring work already undertaken. When we talk about valuing what was already being done, it meant accepting that monitoring and evidence gathering efforts were already in place and using this information to inform our thinking as an evaluation team without trying to 'recreate the wheel' and without being 'dismissive' of the MiH programme manager's monitoring templates or reflection logs[5].
- Developed evaluative thinking: In bringing the evaluation and development of programme theories into the real world of the Community Development Workers this created an opportunity for stakeholders to build capacity around evaluation approaches and foster use to inform their work.

For this to happen CHRR produced 3 Evaluation and Learning Groups (ELG) where Community Development Workers were encouraged to attend to learn about the evaluation, network with each other, reflect, share ideas around evaluation, and how and why MiH works. These ELGs ran from February 2021 to December 2021 and were made up of Community Development Workers across the MiH programme.

[4] The output from the Stakeholder Mapping process can be accessed by contacting the two single points of contact: Angie Greany (Making it Happen programme manager) or Claire Russell (evaluation team).

[5] Angie Greany can be contacted to request a copy of the monitoring and evidence building information that is routinely collected by Community Development Workers.

Key outputs and outcomes from ELGs

- The ELGs helped CHRR to build relationships with the Community Development Workers and break down barriers of communication that gave Community Development Workers a chance to use their own space to ask questions about evaluation. Community Development Workers asked questions that identified realist terminology as a barrier to understanding evaluation. Community Development Workers were also interested in asking about the evaluation process in terms of how the different phases would be tackled and what the timeframe might look like. Fortunately, the ELGs provided an opportunity to break down complex realist terminology (e.g., what is a mechanism) into simple, accessible language (e.g., programme theories becoming assumptions and beliefs). Similarly, an outline of the evaluation phases and approximate time frames for this was also discussed with Community Development Workers.
- The ELGs helped CHRR to develop a deeper and broader understanding of how and why MiH works across East Sussex and informed the development of the eight programme theories under test.
- The ELGs brought the Community Development Workers closer into the evaluation enabling a deeper understanding of the realist approach and how the programme theories for testing were arrived at. This was achieved through the number of ELGs conducted and the relationships developed with Community Development Workers, which enabled us to connect with and understand their environment, as they understood ours. Similarly, the testing phase identified how Community Development Workers were able to engage (or 'receive the evaluation') through supporting and facilitating How and Why conversations.
- The ELGs fostered deeper thinking with the Community Development Workers around evaluation approaches and synthesis with their existing approaches.
- The ELGs provided an opportunity for Community Development Workers to discuss the assets in the areas where they worked and to talk through with the evaluation team. Discussions focused on information about the projects, activities, groups and events that were taking place in the areas and how evidence could be gathered to explore who these worked for, under what circumstances and why. These formed the platform for Community Development Workers to revisit when they shadowed and led on the 'how and why' conversations later in the evaluation.

This deeper thinking and understanding about evaluation (in particular the realist approach to the evaluation) provided us with a valuable opportunity to embed the Community Development Workers into the phase 2.1 programme theory testing exercise where they became actively involved in the evaluation, conducting interviews and focus groups (How and why conversations) individually and in partnership with CHRR.

- In December 2021 CHRR delivered a training workshop on the 'How and Why conversation' which intended to train the Community Development Workers to carry out realist interviews with MiH beneficiaries as part of phase 2.1 testing.
- In January 2022 Community Development Workers shadowed CHRR in the completion of a series of 'How and Why conversations.
- Throughout January, February and March 2022 the Community Development Workers then increased their capacity to engage with the evaluation process and carried out interviews and focus groups by working with the evaluation team. For example through Community Development Workers completing schedule templates or crib sheets, providing verbal feedback on how the interviews and focus groups went alongside their interpretations of linkage between what community members said and how this related to the programme theories being tested; and quality assured by CHRR (including use of a standard template, a member of CHRR attending How and Why conversations and engaging respondents to ensure their voice was authentically captured. Subsequently, an independent academic who is a specialist in realist evaluation assessed the report, checked feedback and 'signed off' on the report to provide the evaluation team with a layer of independent rigour).

In summary, the creation of the ELG infrastructure was a constructive exercise for the evaluation team as it enabled CHRR and Community Development Workers to connect to form mutual professional relationships and support the development of the initial programme theories. This was measured through the Community Development Worker's commitment to coordinating the how and why conversations and survey completions with community members and providing feedback to the evaluation team.

As we move on into the next phase of the evaluation, the ELG infrastructure will be captured and operationalised within the Operational Delivery Team meetings (ODT). The ODT have worked over the last year with Kaye Duerdoth who is based at The Trust for Developing Communities. Together the Community Development Workers and the SCDA Team Leader have worked with Kaye to co-develop and co-produce a learning programme that aims to enhance the capacity of professionals whose work aligns itself to ABCD principles. The sessions link to one another and comprise:

- A deep understanding of ABCD: ABDC principles, what is and what is not ABCD, connection with Making it Happen and engagement approaches to working in the community.
- Creative ways to engage - Getting started in an ABCD way: The practical application of principles and tools that may be useful in outreach work, initial engagement with new and existing groups and building and maintaining working relationships with individuals and groups within the communities.
- Collaboration and cross-sector working: Drawing together ABCD and non ABCD worlds, working together in an ABCD way, overcoming challenges that may be encountered within different approaches and working collaboratively within partnerships.
- Organising for change - working with established groups: Considering how to facilitate communities to take collective action and increase their influence, fundraising, engaging in group working that involves decision making, accessing and managing resources.
- Governance and organisational development skills: Developing leadership skills and facilitating and supporting organisational and infrastructure development within communities.
- Community learning: Facilitating shared learning to raise understanding, confidence and the skills that are aligned to achieving social change.
- Promotion of diversity and inclusion: Working with and facilitation amongst communities where there is diversity and promoting inclusion. This may include people from different cultural backgrounds, those with protected characteristics and those who may be vulnerable too.
- Participative tools and techniques to enhance reflection, learning and evaluation.

The programme started towards the end of 2021 and will be evaluated and presented in next year's report. A brief snapshot of the emerging findings can be located in appendix 12 of this report.

Step 4: Prioritising and Agreeing Programme Theories

We conducted a prioritisation session with our members of the evaluation group for Making it Happen to review and prioritise the programme theories to identify the ones deemed most relevant to take forward and test. The completion of the task resulted in a shorter list of programme theories, which we presented back to the group, and from this, we agreed on eight programme theories to test. Following this, we conducted an update and feedback session with the stakeholders involved in the interview phase so they could see how we were using their insights and assumptions about MiH to develop theories. This session also provided an opportunity in which agreement was provided as to whether the programme theories were representative of their collective beliefs and assumptions about Making it Happen, and how we could keep stakeholders informed and/or involved as we proceeded into the next phase of the evaluation.

The table that follows sets out what the programme theories were and what we were seeking to capture, and substantiate, during the testing phase of the evaluation. The theories below were developed in collaboration with the core group to be plain speaking. Furthermore, each of these theories had additional associated explanatory statements which aimed to capture the realist sense of underlying causality:

Table: Understanding the programme theories:

Programme Theory 1: Building Foundations to Achieve Goals	**Programme Theory:** How and Why MiH works to improve individual self-efficacy, wellbeing, and social capital within the neighbourhoods where MiH is[6]. **What we sought to answer:** If, and in what ways, Making it Happen has enhanced self-efficacy, mental health, and/or wellbeing outcomes resulting from activities and/or groups associated with Making it Happen.
Programme Theory 2: Making Connections	**Programme Theory:** How and Why MiH works to generate changes in the diversity and typology of people's social networks, connections within their community, and awareness of what else exists within their community. **What we sought to answer:** If, and in what ways, Making it Happen contributes to enhancing individual's social networks, relationships and connections within communities.
Programme Theory 3: Communities Taking the Lead	**Programme Theory:** How and Why MiH builds capacity within communities to take forward community action which helps build community resilience, and neighbourhood-based systems for change. **What we sought to answer:** If, and in what ways, Making it Happen has built capacity within communities through neighbourhoods, associations and informal groups and how working together these communities have taken forward ideas which help to build resilience in how they respond and act on things that are important to them.
Programme Theory 4: Impacting on Health and Wellbeing	**Programme Theory:** How and Why MiH works to develop solutions which go on to improve individual mental health and wellbeing of people within communities and create healthier places where they live. **What we sought to answer:** If, and in what ways, Making it Happen contributes to enhancing an individual's mental health and wellbeing following involvement in the processes, activities, decision-making and realising change in their communities.
Programme Theory 5: Community Participation in Decision Making	**Programme Theory:** How and Why MiH works to generate receptivity amongst organisations to enhance community involvement in decision-making and action. **What we sought to answer:** If, and in what ways, Making it Happen contributes to enhancing or influencing how other organisations involve communities in decision-making and design or shaping of services provided in the community.
Programme Theory 6: Embedded ABCD – Increasing Capacity, Adopting the Principles and Informing Practice	**Programme Theory:** How and Why MiH works to generate traction amongst key stakeholders to want to learn and know more about ABCD and how it can be integrated/adopted within their areas of work. **What we sought to answer:** If, and in what ways, Making it Happen contributes to enhancing colleagues/wider stakeholders across the system and sectors' understanding of ABCD and how they apply it within their area of practice/responsibility
Programme Theory 7: Collaboration Beyond Communities	**Programme Theory:** How and Why MiH works to influence change across the wider system where there are mutual/reciprocal benefits to be had. **What we sought to answer:** If, and in what ways, Making it Happen contributes to influencing and supporting wider system change.
Programme Theory 8: Accessible and Communities Being Heard and Making Change	**Programme Theory:** How and Why MiH works to help people and population groups have a voice, and more accessible, and better coordinated, services for them in local places. **What we sought to answer:** If, and in what ways, Making it Happen contributes to creating more accessible, better coordinated services for people and communities.

[6] Public health distinguishes three types of social capital: bonding (strong ties between people, for example within families or groups of friends); bridging (weaker ties, for example with work colleagues); and linking (connections between those with different levels of power) (Public Health England, 2017). Where the evaluation refers to social capital, it is referring to any aspect where bonding, bridging or linking occurs within the community.

As you can see from each of the programme theories, they are theorised at the level of the programme i.e. about how Making it Happen could lead to generating changes in outcomes as a product of if its efforts and/or through the direct involvement and participation in ABCD activities, processes, and decision-making. Subsequently, each overall programme theory was underpinned by a series of more specific explanatory assumptions and beliefs which combined together represented the overall programme theory i.e. the different ways or certain aspects of MiH in practice that could result in generating different changes which lead to the specified outcome occurring. These explanatory assumptions and beliefs are discussed and subsequently tested in more detail in the testing phase of the evaluation.

Summary: This section of the report has outlined the steps that have taken in collaboration with Making it Happen staff and partners to develop, and then prioritise, programme theories to test in the next phase of the evaluation. In doing so, we have sought to build relationships with key stakeholders, understand motivations for evaluation, promote evaluative thinking, provide appropriate opportunities to build staff and partners capacity in evaluation, and help to gain a shared understanding of Making it Happen through the programme theories which represent it.

Evaluation: Phase 2

Where We Are At: Testing the Making it Happen Programme Theories

Introductory Comment

Completing Phase 1 of the evaluation, alongside the collaborative ways of working with different stakeholders led us iteratively into the testing phase of the evaluation, which we refer to as 'phase 2'. Given the proportion of programme theories available for testing and exploration we collaboratively agreed that programme theories 1-4 would be tested in this phase (which we refer to as phase 2.1). These four programme theories were selected based on the impacts and contributions MIH is having on people at a local level, and the wider community. These are presented here alongside a number of explanatory assumptions which underpin the overarching programme theory (e.g. 1.1, 1.2), which were formed from the 100 plus theories we found, illustrating what they mean for MiH. For clarity, in testing the programme theories we confirmed, refined or revised the explanatory assumptions, thereby informing our overall understanding of the overarching programme theory.

Programme theories under test in phase 2.1

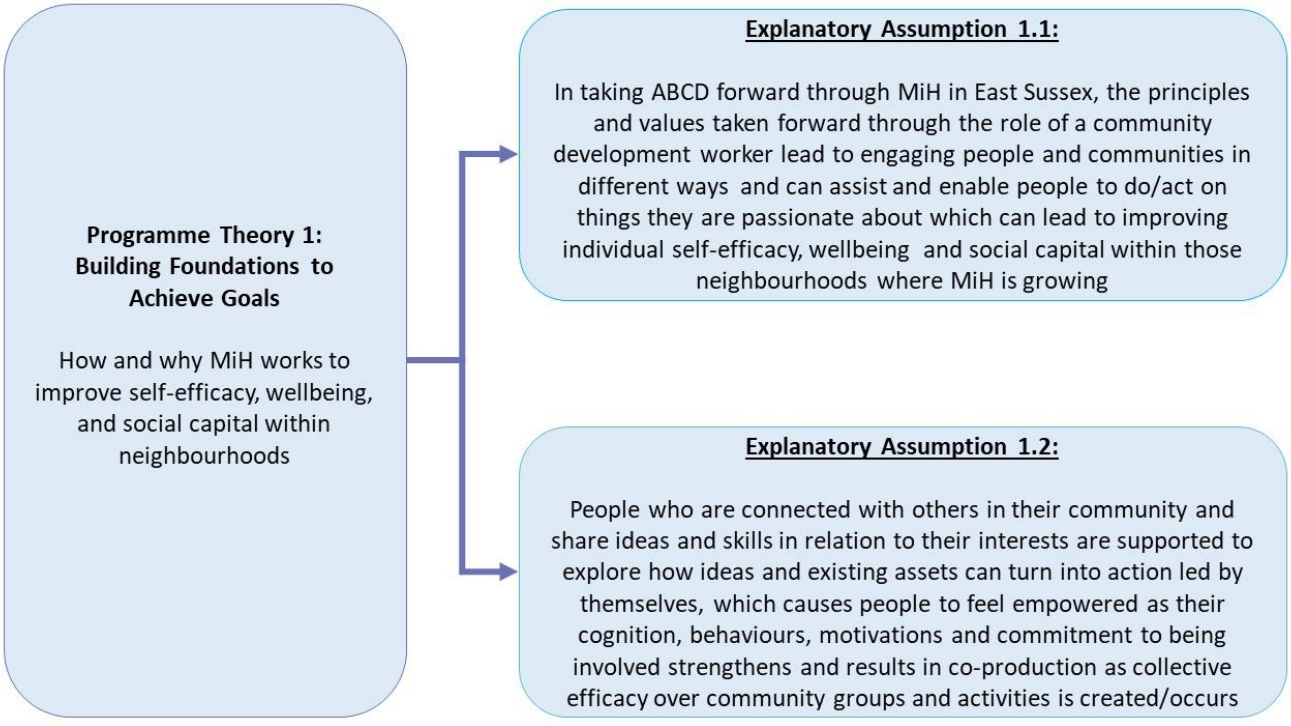


Figure 2. Programme Theory 1

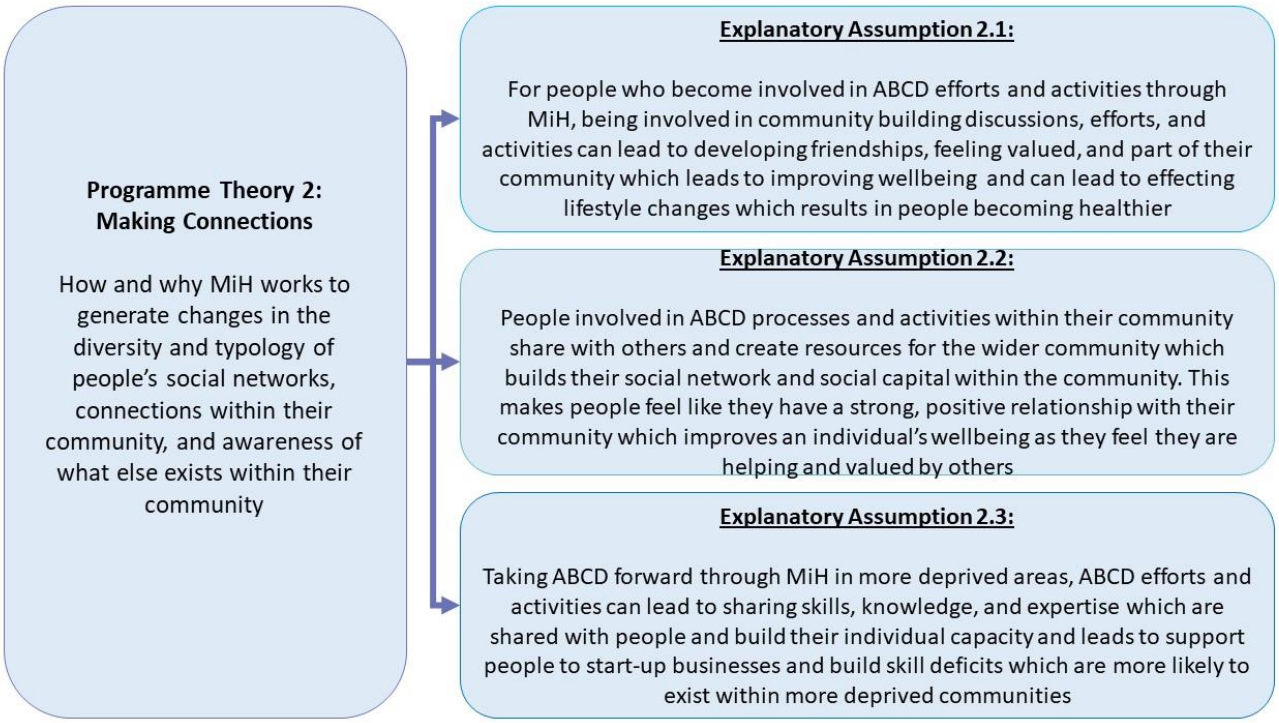


Figure 3. Programme Theory 2 (Assumptions 2.1-2.3)

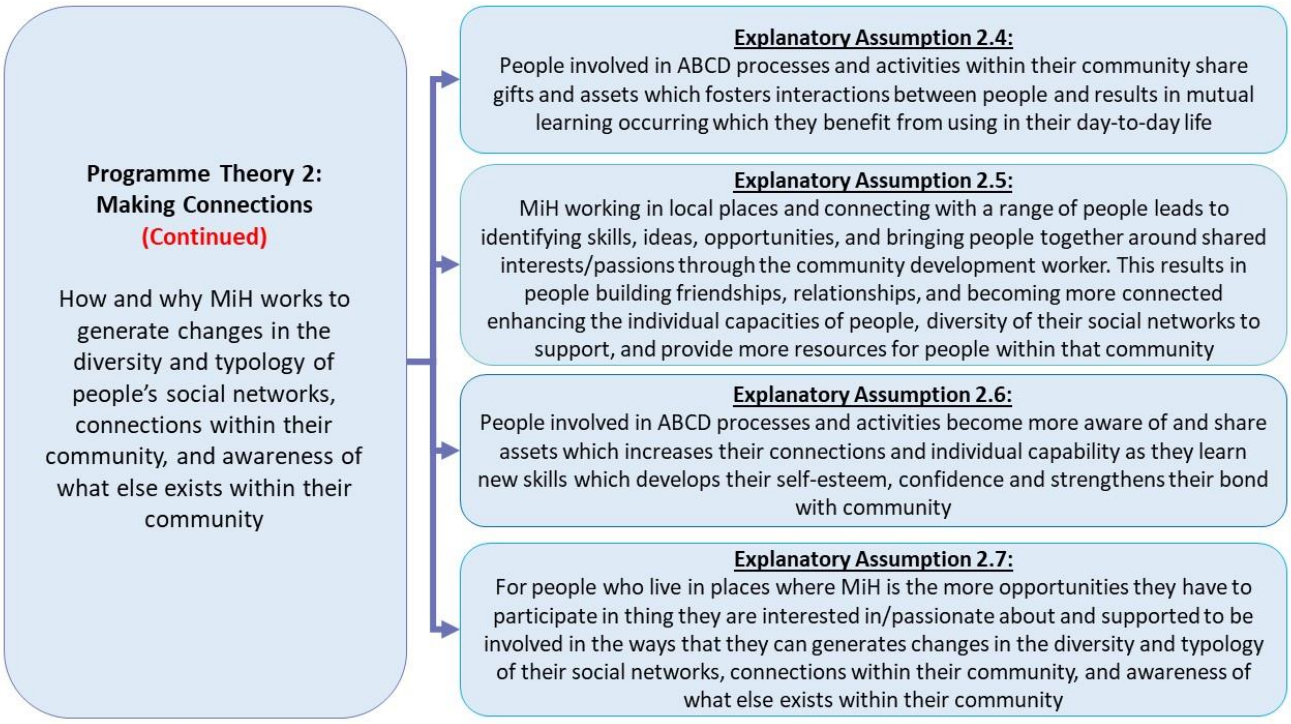


Figure 4. Programme Theory 2 (Continued) (Assumptions 2.4-2.7)

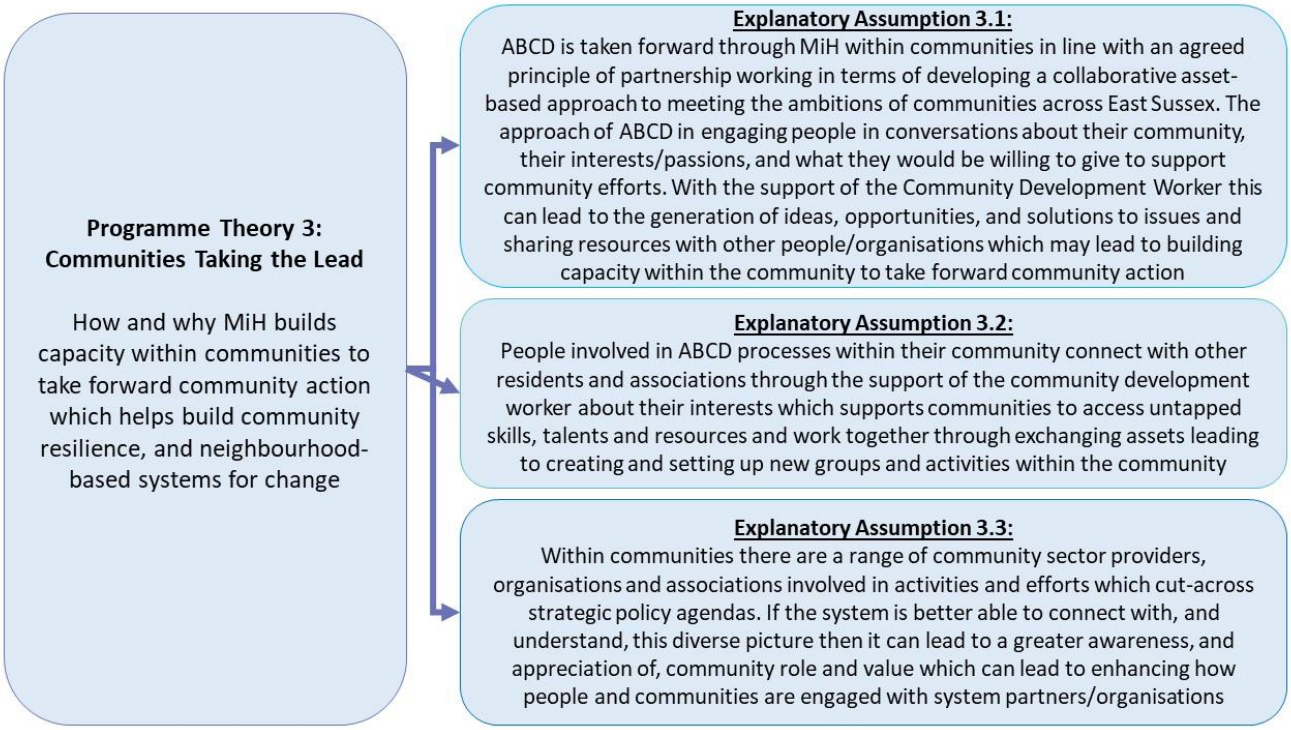


Figure 5. Programme Theory 3 (Assumptions 3.1-3.3)

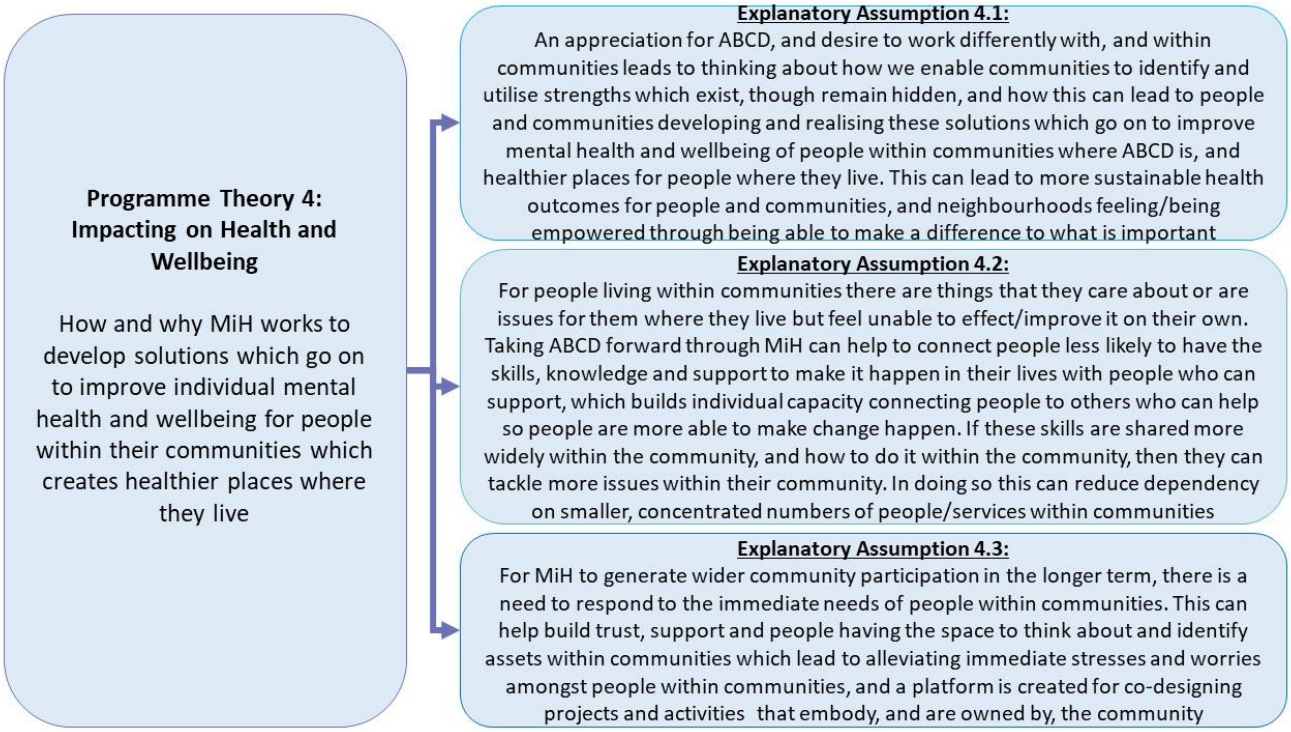


Figure 6. Programme Theory 4 (Assumptions 4.1-4.3)

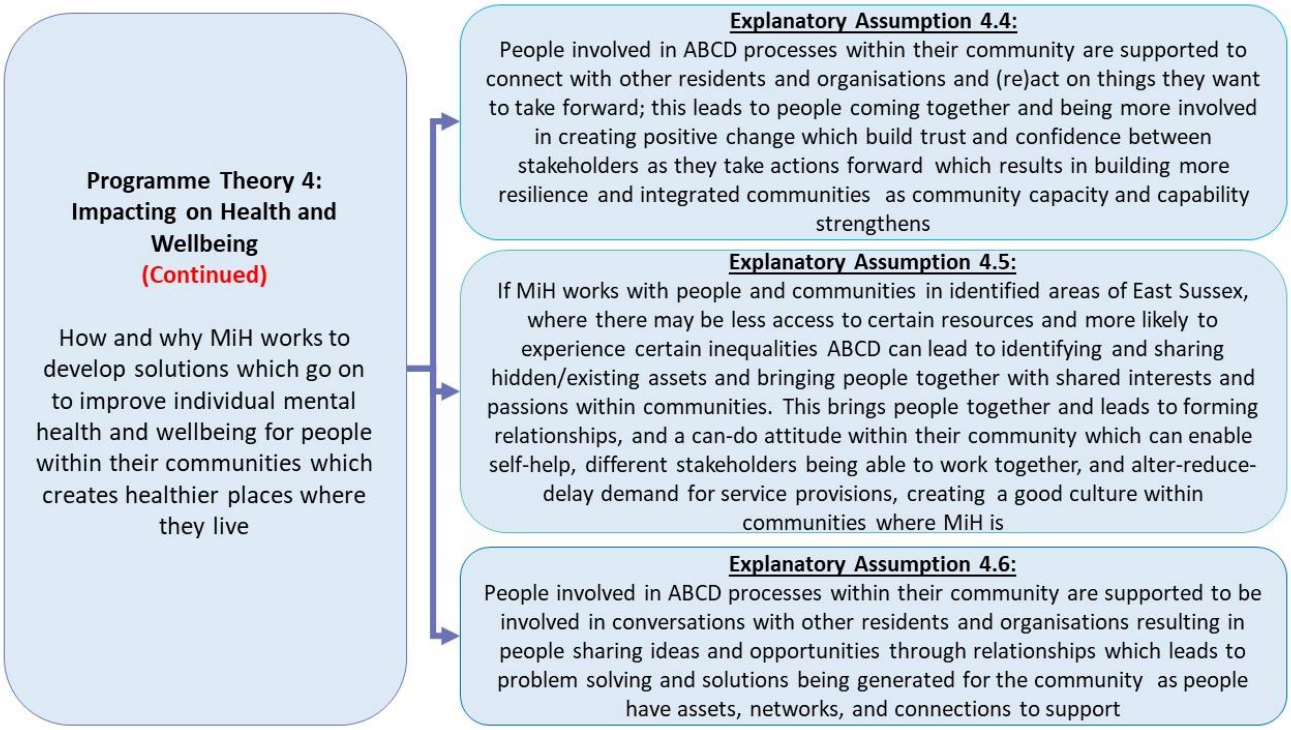


Figure 7. Programme Theory 4 (Continued) (Assumptions 4.4-4.6)

Methods

These programme theories were tested collaboratively between December 2021 and March 2022 utilising qualitative and quantitative research methods that were agreed upon by the evaluation and programme commissioners. In this phase CHRR worked closely with SCDA and Community Development Workers to bring them into the heart of the Realist Evaluation. Specifically, Community Development Workers took control over the evaluation where CHRR provided training on interview and focus group techniques, which enabled them to take the approaches into their communities and practice. It is important to note that CDW involvement and MiH respondent investment in this evaluation were key to testing and refining the programme theories through both the strong CDW-beneficiary relationships and the clarity MiH respondents provided in understanding their experiences, judgements and inferences of MiH.

The How and why conversation (Community and Development Workers Interviews with Community Members)

This approach (also known as realist interviews in academic settings) involved Community Development Workers going out into communities and conducting a series of semi-structured how and why conversations with MiH beneficiaries. Having received training from CHRR in December 2021 the Community Development Workers held flexible non-intrusive conversations with community members that focused specifically on the four programme theories under test. In each conversation the Community Development Workers presented ideas about the programme theories to explore in more depth how and why those theories were unfolding (or not). All Making it Happen partners participated in coordinating interviews. A total of sixteen interviews took place, with Community Development Workers either shadowing or leading the interviews. The interview schedule was the same for the individual interviews and for the focus group conversations. The schedule template was developed in collaboration with the Making it Happen programme manager and Community Development Worker team leader who signed off on the content within the template.

The How and why conversation (Community and Development Workers Focus Groups with Community Members)

This approach (also known as the realist focus group in academic settings) involved Community Development Workers engaging with community members to conduct semi-structured how and why conversations with groups of MiH beneficiaries (in group settings). Having received training from CHRR in December 2021 the Community Development Workers held flexible non-intrusive conversations with community members that focused specifically on the four programme theories under test. In each conversation the Community Development Workers presented ideas about the programme theories to explore in more depth how and why those theories were unfolding (or not). In line with the capacity building support of the evaluation Community Development Workers initially shadowed CHRR in a series of How and Why conversations in January 2022 which sought to give them confidence in conducting their own. A total of fourteen people took part in one of three of the focus groups that were held in January, February and March.

Surveys

An initial Community Member Survey was developed collaboratively with the Making it Happen programme manager. It was piloted briefly at the end of some of the focus groups and interview conversations with community members. Whilst the survey will be developed further over time, fifteen responses were analysed in time for inclusion in this report. The responses were useful to test, and where relevant, substantiate the programme theories based on a wider community member audience than those people who had already taken part in interviews.

Case Studies of Making it Happen Assets

The evaluation team collaborated with the Making it Happen programme manager and team leader who developed a series of five case studies that represented a cross-section of assets among the five core partners. Examining these case studies through a realist lens, we aimed to capture the how and the why within the case studies presented. These case studies contributed to evidencing the programme theories in providing rich detail and highlighting the real-world contexts of the Making it Happen programme.

Findings: Testing and Refining the Making it Happen Programme Theories

Programme Theory Testing and Refinement Analyses: In Detail

Programme theory 1 – Building Foundations to Achieve Goals
How and why MiH works to improve self-efficacy, wellbeing, and social capital within neighbourhoods

This section draws upon the key findings emerging from the testing of programme theory 1, and the supporting explanatory assumptions depicting in the following box:

1.1 In taking ABCD forward through MiH in East Sussex, the principles and values taken forward through the role of a community development worker lead to engaging people and communities in different ways and can assist and enable people to do/act on things they are passionate about which can lead to improving individual self-efficacy, wellbeing and social capital within those neighbourhoods where MiH is growing

1.2 People who are connected with others in their community and share ideas and skills in relation to their interests are supported to explore how ideas and existing assets can turn into action led by themselves, which causes people to feel empowered as their cognition, behaviours, motivations and commitment to being involved strengthens and results in co-production as collective efficacy over community groups and activities is created/occurs

Box 1: Assumptions under test

Following the analysis of the How and Why conversations, two key findings emerged associated with programme theory:

1. Improving self-efficacy, wellbeing, and social capital within the community
2. Empowering communities through collective efficacy

Both key findings are explained through, and supported by quotes from the data, and linked to each relevant assumption, finalising in a confirmed, refined, or refuted programme theory.

Key finding 1: Improving self-efficacy, wellbeing, and social capital within the community

Key finding 1 focuses on the role of MiH in supporting and engaging people and communities in improving self-efficacy, wellbeing, and social capital (1.1). Throughout the How and Why discussion, several participants commented on the impact of MiH in supporting communities, through both practical support (e.g., assisting with documentation) and the enthusiasm and support of the Community Development Worker (CDW) in taking actions forward. To the participants, the support of MiH was invaluable, particularly for marginalised communities or during times of difficulty or low motivation, with some participants citing MiH as motivating community members to act on their volition for the betterment and support of the community group (1.1):

"MiH gave them [community members] the motivation to seek out finding and wider support. Successful funding bids and donations subsequently give a sense of 'things improving'" (V&P)

"MiH has offered lots of enthusiasm and practical support that has built up confidence about the project going forward" (AW)

Several participants discussed the role of MiH in supporting their self-efficacy and boosting their confidence, with these participants feeling empowered to undertake actions with MiH's support. Many participants cited MiH as affording community members opportunities to participate in community groups and projects, affording community members a sense of shared purpose and developing social capital (i.e., resources available to community members through developed social networks) within communities (1.1), irrespective of community member age, gender etc. Having a shared sense of purpose was found to be important for both bringing the community closer under a shared goal and for community wellbeing. This finding was particularly apparent amongst marginalised respondents, where community groups (supported by MiH) provided these community groups with motivation to achieve tangible, positive impacts within the wider community (1.1). Similarly, several participants noted the positive impact of the community groups themselves for community members, citing having witness community group members increase their confidence and self-efficacy owing to group attendance and involvement within the group:

"The garden [group project] has given the individuals a sense of purpose, a reason to get up in the morning, even if it's solely to rake soil, and sow some bulbs etc." (DP)

"People can see that they can achieve goals and that they can be part of the collective decision making. They can see how together we build our community up and develop approaches to solve important issues and promote a healthy space… When things are achieved, people can see how it happens and it brings more people to these community endeavours" (PC)

"It is evident that people's self-confidence and self-efficacy has increased as a result of attending the group. They may still have their issues (e.g., poor physical health) but through attending the group they seem in a better situation to deal with them. A lady who as mobility issues was joining in the dancing at a recent social event…this probably wouldn't have happened without her joining [the group]" (F)

"Our presence was there, and we could assimilate with others. Where someone didn't have the confidence or understanding, they could assimilate something from the group. They have lived experiences because of fragility to know how to greet or meet people and connect with them to build their own social networks or relationships" (FL)

In summary, key finding 1 supports the credibility of 1.1 in-part, providing a better understanding of how self-efficacy, wellbeing and social capital is improved within the community. In their discussion, participants were found to be engaged and supported by both MiH and the CDW, who provided invaluable practical support, encouragement and aided in the development of social capital. Participants additionally felt that MiH supported them (and others within the community) in developing their confidence and social capital, with participants feeling empowered to take actions forward. Where community groups were established with the support of MiH, community member wellbeing was found to be improved through bringing communities closer under a shared purpose, leading to positive, tangible community impacts. This led to the following refinement:

Refined Programme Theory

Refined 1.1: In taking ABCD forward through MiH in East Sussex, the CDW brings principles and values that lead to engaging people. The CDW *assists and empowers people to do*/act on things they are passionate about. *Where community groups are developed, the shared sense of purpose between community members leads* to improved self-efficacy, wellbeing and social capital in *communities where MiH takes place*

Box 2: Refined theory (1.1)

Key finding 2: Empowering Communities Through Collective Efficacy

Key finding 2 builds on the understanding of the ways in which community groups become empowered with the support of MiH to explore actions, resulting in collective efficacy (i.e., what community members are willing to do to improve their community) over community groups and activities. As discussed above, through the support of MiH and the CDW, community groups are developed, affording community members an opportunity for involvement around a shared sense of purpose regardless of individual characteristics. Through their involvement, social capital is developed through community members bringing their own ideas, skills and knowledge. In fostering and supporting community member involvement, the commonality of the shared purpose and experiences of community members was discussed as beneficial in forging friendships and trust in an informal, yet supportive, environment (1.2). Several participants noted community groups as empowering community members to act on their ideas with the support of MiH. In being empowered, the participants noted the actions of community members as beneficial in supporting both themselves and other community members:

> *"We have shared our knowledge with each other of what to plant where, or what to cook with the produce; tips and techniques. For some, especially those isolated in a flat, they may be completely new to planting and gardening, so it has been important to have varying levels of knowledge and be patient with each other" (DP)*

> *"People are starting to realise that they have some power to make changes themselves, they don't need to wait to be told what to do or wait for overloaded services like NHS, mental health teams etc., to help them, they can seek help through informal channels and set up small peer groups as a stop gap. For some, this is enough that they might not need the main services anymore" (N)*

> *"People can use what they are learning and produce things for themselves at home too. They can also share with others and teach them. Someone else said that as well as sharing produce, we can also add it to food boxes at the [food]bank, draw people to us as well" (GL)*

Some participants provided further examples of empowerment amongst community members, most notably with the participants highlighting the confidence which comes from being part of a supportive community group. It was additionally found that community group members would often feel empowered to step beyond attending community groups, becoming more involved in supporting one-another. These actions included community members becoming volunteers, supporting new group members, and taking forward community actions (1.2). This was particularly important for older respondents who had felt otherwise marginalised previously:

> *"Members are beginning to take more control in the running of the branch…volunteers take on small roles in the group, acting as stewards to make sure no-one is ever left alone, and new members have a contact" (F)*

> *"[Group member] ended up teaching the students because her trauma has value. It provides openings where people can see that their value can have impact on areas where they wouldn't have thought that could possibly happen" (FL)*

The support that MiH offers to community members was found to be central to the foundations of collective efficacy, as many participants noted having bought together their community to accomplish a shared goal (1.2). Through the involvement of MiH, collective efficacy was found to be co-produced as many community members joined community groups, sharing their skills, knowledge and experience in support of the participants' endeavour to resolve issues within their community. In coming together under a shared goal, community members were discussed as supporting community groups, and by extension the wider community, cohesively bringing together individuals of all ages and characteristics:

> *"The group has become quite close, and we support one-another; when someone is poorly, someone else takes some of the work off them" (DP)*

> *"We have a food surplus, so [we] are connecting with a foodbank and encouraging people to come here and pick their own, take part and grow too" (M)*

> *"It's all about reaching out to everyone during these difficult times…it's been a challenge for local authority, and it's been isolating for some, so for community projects there are opportunities here. We can look into [the] community and help each other. People can use this to help themselves too" (GL)*

In summary, key finding 2 supports the credibility of 1.2 entirely, confirming this assumption in providing understanding of how communities are empowered through self-efficacy. In line with the assumption, it was found that participants identified community groups as connecting others through the commonality of a shared interest, empowering community members into self-led actions. As community members became empowered, collective efficacy was co-produced between community members, the participants and MiH, as community members came forward to share their skills, ideas and motivations in support of community groups and activities.

Confirmed Programme Theory

Confirmed 1.2 People who are connected with others in their community and share ideas and skills in relation to their interests are supported to explore how ideas and existing assets can turn into action led by themselves, which causes people to feel empowered as their cognition, behaviours, motivations and commitment to being involved strengthens and results in co-production as collective efficacy over community groups and activities is created/occurs.

Box 3: Confirmed theory (1.2)

To conclude, from testing programme theory 1, the initial assumption of 1.1 has been revised in line with the knowledge provided by the participants through the how and why conversations. Theory 1.2 was however confirmed in reflecting the lived experience of community members involved with MiH. In testing these assumptions, we have a greater understanding of how MiH works to build foundations co-productively with the community to achieve community goals. MiH works through engaging community members through providing support (both practical and emotional) through the CDW to take actions forward. In working collaboratively with MiH, community members are motivated, feeling confident and empowered, developing self-efficacy as they act for the betterment of their community. Additionally, we now know that in creating community groups, MiH brings communities together around a shared sense of purpose, developing social capital as community members bring their own ideas, knowledge and skills to community groups. In bringing community members together, friendships are fostered within the community, leading to the co-production of collective efficacy as community groups work toward a shared goal. This finding has broader reach in its practical application in understanding of how and why communities in East Sussex work together to create change. Knowing this information, the Community Development Workers can utilise this information to beneficially impact the wider East Sussex community in the support they provide. Based on these findings, a revised overarching programme theory is presented:

Programme Theory 1 (Refined):

MiH works *in East Sussex through building the foundations to co-productively support community members to achieve their goals through improving and fostering* self-efficacy, wellbeing and social capital within *the community, as community members come together around a shared sense of purpose to work toward a shared goal that benefits themselves and the wider community*

Box 4: Programme Theory 1 (Refined)

Programme Theory 2 – Making Connections

How and why MiH works to generate changes in the diversity and typology of people's social networks, connections within their community, and awareness of what else exists within their community

This section draws upon the key findings emerging from the testing of this programme theory and the supporting assumptions and beliefs 2.1-2.7.

2.1 For people who become involved in ABCD efforts and activities through MiH, being involved in community building discussions, efforts, and activities can lead to developing friendships, feeling valued, and part of their community which leads to improving wellbeing and can lead to effecting lifestyle changes which results in people becoming healthier

2.2 People involved in ABCD processes and activities within their community share with others and create resources for the wider community which builds their social network and social capital within the community. This makes people feel like they have a strong, positive relationship with their community which improves an individual's wellbeing as they feel they are helping and valued by others

2.3 Taking ABCD forward through MiH in more deprived areas, ABCD efforts and activities can lead to sharing skills, knowledge, and expertise which are shared with people and build their individual capacity and leads to support people to start-up businesses and build skill deficits which are more likely to exist within more deprived communities

2.4 People involved in ABCD processes and activities within their community share gifts and assets which fosters interactions between people and results in mutual learning occurring which they benefit from using in their day-to-day life

2.5 MiH working in local places and connecting with a range of people leads to identifying skills, ideas, opportunities, and bringing people together around shared interests/passions through the community development worker. This results in people building friendships, relationships, and becoming more connected enhancing the individual capacities of people, diversity of their social networks to support, and provide more resources for people within that community

2.6 People involved in ABCD processes and activities become more aware of and share assets which increases their connections and individual capability as they learn new skills which develops their self-esteem, confidence and strengthens their bond with community

2.7 For people who live in places where MiH is the more opportunities they have to participate in thing they are interested in/passionate about and supported to be involved in the ways that they can generates changes in the diversity and typology of their social networks, connections within their community, and awareness of what else exists within their community

Box 5: Assumptions under test

Following the analysis of the How and Why conversation, three key findings emerged associated with programme theory 2:

1. Awareness of what exists within the community

2. Generating change in the diversity and typology of people's social networks

3. Enhancing connections within the community

All key findings are explained through, and supported by quotes from the data, and are linked to each relevant assumption, finalising in a confirmed, refined, or refuted programme theory.

Key Finding 1: Awareness of what exists within the community

Communities in which MiH took place were noted as benefiting from the many and varied opportunities which occurred within the community (2.7) as the CDW played an important role is raising awareness of these opportunities. As some participants noted, raising awareness afforded connections with other community groups which would have otherwise likely remained unknown to them. Through identifying opportunities, MiH and the CDW were considered an integral information source, particularly with respect to their knowledge of the wider community (2.7):

"Every time there has been an article in print or on social media it has resulted in a flurry of public interest and/or people who are offering to help/support" (AW)

"We heard about a group called Vertical Horizons which are a group of people looking to bring greener façades to the buildings in Newhaven and might be interested in what we are achieving in a small space. One of the group [members] came to look at the work we are doing" (DP)

Additionally, some participants noted that community group members could additionally serve as a valued source of information, supporting other group members in identifying other opportunities which exist within the local community. Importantly, the knowledge of both CDW and community group members was found to generate change in community members' social networks, as they connected with both outside organisation and services, and with the wider community (2.7). In forming connections, several marginalised participants cited community members as increasing interactions (2.7) within the community as community members became more aware of what existed in their local area (2.7):

"By attending [community-based group] people meet people who are members of other clubs and find out about other activities and it encourages them to access other activities e.g., bowling, crochet" (F)

"[We] feel more knowledgeable about what supports, services, and activities happen in the town through knowing MiH. [We] will happily ask MiH for community information and when needed to pass on to others" (V and P)

"MiH have been great with signposting, referring, help with promotion and connections after, during, and before the idea became a project" (N)

"The community themselves have been the active ones on the ground. There is a much stronger awareness of what is out there, and we have snowballed this too" (PC)

"We knew that with lots of group activities as well as reaching out to diverse groups, we could also reach out to young people and older people too… We were able to connect with young, old, and all people from different backgrounds" (GL)

In summary, key finding 1 supported the credibility of 2.7 in-part, leading to the following refinement, providing a better understanding of how awareness is raised within the community. Within this finding, MiH serves as an important information source for community groups in identifying opportunities for connection to other groups and services. What was previously unknown however was how community group members supported one-another through identifying further opportunities in the community, thereby raising awareness of what else exists.

Refined Programme Theory

Refined 2.7 For people who live in places where MiH is there are more opportunities *for community members* to participate in things that they are interested in/passionate about and *are supported to be involved in by other community members and MiH. Attending these opportunities* generates change in the diversity and typology of social networks and connections with the community *as community members connect and support one-another, raising awareness* of what else exists within their community

Box 6: Refined theory (2.7)

Key finding 2: Generating change in the diversity and typology of people's social networks

Following key finding 1, community groups were noted as affording community members an opportunity to develop social networks. As some participants discussed, MiH and more specifically the CDW, played an important role in furthering diverse social networks within communities (2.5), supporting the participants in fostering connections within the wider community. A few participants cited the CDW as also forming introductions between community members, thereby supporting participants in enhancing their awareness of what exists within their community and widening their social networks (2.5). As MiH and the CDW supported participants, connections were formed as social networks diversified. These enhanced connections and social network afforded participants (and community members) an opportunity to both realise what exists in the community and to come together to share their skills, knowledge and resources (2.2). In diversifying their social networks, the participants noted fostering friendships and bonds within the community (2.5) regardless of individual characteristics, which in turn led to strong, positive relationships with community members (2.2). It was found that the strong, positive relationships formed within the community enhanced community engagement, particularly for marginalised communities, as communities came together in support through feeling valued in helping others (2.2) and enhancing capacity as latent resources are introduced within the community (2.5):

"CDW and [I] have chatted and made a date for [me] and CDW to sit at the foodbank café, trying to attract some younger people and CDW suggests [I] chat to the youth worker at the centre to see if some older young people would be interested" (IT)

"Networks have considerably improved, and people are now connecting more – this is a catalyst for new things… this isn't just about me carrying out this role and bringing people in, it's the CDWs and other members of the community who are [now] starting to come forward" (H)

"MiH was useful for making connections with people and publicising the group, as [I] wasn't from Newhaven, it was helpful to have people who knew the groups and services in the area, local newsletters to advertise in etc." (F)

"We have built up connections and the CDW have been key to this" (GL)

"One important thing to say is that one of the things our community garden really benefited from was having a [CDW]. She could focus on supporting and welcoming people and all of their ideas'' (M)

"[The] initial work of MiH funding [has] led to this… People can relate to each other's creativity and that the bond, then the friendship, then the confidence to be around other people" (FL)

In summary, key finding 2 supported the credibility of both 2.2 and 2.5. This finding has led to a greater understanding of how change is generated in diversity and typology of people's social networks in East Sussex. MiH, and the CDW, were found to play an integral role in supporting and fostering connections within the community. These connections were found to bring the community together, building positive, strong relationships as people feel valued, alongside creating a diverse social network which brings with it new, often latent resources. As such, 2.2 and 2.5 are confirmed below:

Confirmed Programme Theory

Confirmed 2.2 People involved in ABCD processes and activities within their community share with others and create resources for the wider community which builds their social network and social capital within the community. This makes people feel like they have a strong, positive relationship with their community which improves an individual's wellbeing as they feel they are helping and valued by others

Confirmed 2.5 MiH working in local places and connecting with a range of people leads to identifying skills, ideas, opportunities, and bringing people together around shared interests/passions through the community development worker. This results in people building friendships, relationships, and becoming more connected enhancing the individual capacities of people, diversity of their social networks to support, and provide more resources for people within that community networks and more resources within the community

Box 7: Confirmed theory (2.2, 2.5)

Key finding 3: Enhancing connections within the community

Key finding 3 builds on the foundations of prior findings as it was found that MiH often afforded community members an opportunity to be involved in discussions, efforts and activities related to developing resources within the community (2.1). With the support of MiH, a few participants noted having influenced community decisions through actively engaging with connections fostered by MiH (2.4). In turn, these participants felt valued as part of their community (2.1) as their involvement and influence had beneficial impact on the wider community:

"[MiH] are constantly thinking to include and ask our opinion on things like working with active Sussex to help develop a program of activities aimed at some of the children we work with in the families we support, those at risk of gang culture and anti-social behaviour" (N)

"Events at the community hall are now involving members from the [community-based group], and led to people being more connected to things going on in their community" (T)

As has been discussed previously, interactions within community groups allow community members to meet around a shared interest, in turn becoming more aware of what exists within the community and individual skills and assets that can be shared (2.4, 2.6). It was found however that the connections made within community groups had a further benefit, as older participants in particular noted community members as being more self-assured and confident (2.6) through attending community groups. Additionally, participants cited community members as increasing individual capability as they learnt and developed new skills within community groups (2.6):

"By getting a bit of self-confidence back they start participating in wider community activities… Once they come along, they usually go on to attend other groups and activities" (F)

"There is a lunch club before the Friday art club, they would watch me set up and be curious about the club. I've had a few people join or come along from the lunch club which is nice" (DP)

"When someone comes along and has a specialist area, that is independently encouraged. For example, one person knew about composting systems. From there we all developed the ability to understand the science behind it and use the system more productively" (M)

Individual wellbeing was further found to be supported by enhanced connections within the community via community groups (2.1) as community members were noted as mutually learning from one-another, developing skills which were considered by the participants as beneficially impactful on their daily lives (2.4). The beneficial skills that participants noted occurred firstly as practical, physical skills which community members identified as a deficit which they could learn (2.3), such as gardening techniques, thereby developing their individual capacity (2.3). Secondly, participants cited personal skills associated with developing increased confidence, being more resilient and improved wellbeing as community members came together in communication and strengthening community bonds (2.6):

"MiH gave us a grant which meant that local families who needed this SEN support were able to access it for free. Newhaven has a very high level of special needs children and families with additional needs that the insiders' guide has been a bit of a lifeline for some" (N)

"The group has provided an opportunity for people to come together – which has led to them making friends, finding out and joining other activities, improving their self-confidence and having fun" (F)

"We participate in the conversation, though we are not participating to make people better. We participate to catch the nuggets of potential and then we use creativity and imagination to create a potential to see how this can come into being…people in deprivation don't need to be given anything; what they can manifest from within is significant" (FL)

In summary, key finding 3 supports the credibility of 2.1, 2.4, 2.6, with 2.3 supported in-part, providing a greater understanding of how connections are enhanced through community interaction. MiH is central to supporting communities to engage, fostering connections as people feel part of the community through participating in community groups. Through participation, community members were noted as feeling more confident and self-assured through their increased capacity to learn new practical skills, in turn becoming more resilient and increasing their wellbeing through strengthened community bonds. This led to the following theory confirmation and refinement:

Accepted and Refined Programme Theories

Confirmed 2.1: For people who become involved in ABCD efforts and activities through MiH, being involved in community building discussions, efforts, and activities can lead to developing friendships, feeling valued, and part of their community which leads to improving wellbeing and can lead to effecting lifestyle changes which results in people becoming healthier

Refined 2.3: Taking ABCD forward through MiH in more deprived areas, ABCD efforts and activities can lead to sharing skills, knowledge, and expertise which are shared with people and build their individual capacity and can lead to support people to start-up businesses and/or to build to reduce skill deficits which are more likely to exist within more deprived communities

Confirmed 2.4: People involved in ABCD processes and activities within their community share gifts and assets which fosters interactions between people and results in mutual learning occurring which they benefit from using in their day-to-day life

Confirmed 2.6: People involved in ABCD processes and activities become more aware of and share assets which increases their connections and individual capability as they learn new skills which develops their self-esteem, confidence and strengthens their bond with community

Box 8: Confirmed and Refined theory (2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6)

In conclusion, from testing programme theory 2, the initial assumptions have been both confirmed (2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6) and refined (2.3, 2.7). In testing these assumptions, we have a greater understanding of how and why MiH works to generate changes in the diversity and typology of people's social networks, connections within their community, and awareness of what else exists. MiH was considered as playing an important role in raising awareness of what else exists in the community, being considered an important source of information for connecting community members together around their shared ideas. This finding has a broader reach in understanding how people become more aware of what is in their local area, and the role of CDW in supporting community members in fostering connections, diversifying social networks as positive relationships were formed between community members, their community and other organisations. In diversifying social networks, latent, unknown yet beneficial resources were identified and engaged with, leading to community members developing new skills (both practical and personal). MiH therefore had a significant impact in enhancing connections, as community members had influence over their local community via influencing community decisions, leading to community members feeling valued as part of their local community. Based on these findings, a revised overarching theory is presented:

Programme Theory 2 (Refined):

MiH works *in East Sussex through providing a greater* awareness of what else exists in the community, *being a valued source of information in connecting community members together around shared ideas. As people become more aware of what exists in the community, MiH supports community members in* generating change in the diversity and typology of people's social networks *through fostering* connections within the community *and providing opportunities to positively influence community decisions, and identify and engage with resources community resources*

Box 9: Overarching programme theory 2 (refined)

Programme Theory 3- Communities Taking the Lead
How and why MiH builds capacity within communities to take forward community action which helps build community resilience, and neighbourhood-based systems for change

At the heart of this programme theory were the following assumptions and beliefs summarised in the following box:

Assumption under test 3.1: ABCD is taken forward through MiH within communities in line with an agreed principle of partnership working in terms of developing a collaborative asset-based approach to meeting the ambitions of communities across East Sussex. The approach of ABCD in engaging people in conversations about their community, their interests/passions, and what they would be willing to give to support community efforts. With the support of the Community Development Worker this can lead to the generation of ideas, opportunities, and solutions to issues and sharing resources with other people/organisations which may lead to building capacity within the community to take forward community action

Assumption under test 3.2: People involved in ABCD processes within their community connect with other residents and associations through the support of the community development worker about their interests which supports communities to access untapped skills, talents and resources and work together through exchanging assets leading to creating and setting up new groups and activities within the community

Assumption under test 3.3: Within communities there are a range of community sector providers, organisations and associations involved in activities and efforts which cut-across strategic policy agendas. If the system is better able to connect with, and understand, this diverse picture then it can lead to a greater awareness, and appreciation of, community role and value which can lead to enhancing how people and communities are engaged with system partners/organisations

Box 10: Assumptions under test

Following the analysis of the How and Why conversations, two key findings emerged associated with programme theory 3:

1. The collaborative role of MiH in identifying and building capacity
2. Developing community resilience and neighbourhood-based systems for change

Both key findings are explained through, and supported by quotes from the data, and linked to each relevant assumption, finalising in a confirmed, refined, or refuted programme theory.

Key Finding 1: The Collaborative Role of MiH in Identifying Need and Building Capacity

This key finding focuses on the role of MiH in identifying and supporting community member needs, through identifying assets within the community and building capacity in collaboration with community members. This finding focuses in-part on 3.1 and entirely on 3.2 and 3.3, given the emphasis on building capacity within the local community.

It was clear from the data that MiH and the CDW played a vital role in assisting communities across East Sussex in line with the ABCD principles of partnership working and developing collaborative approaches to meeting

community-member ambitions. Prior to this collaboration, however, was the recognition amongst the participants of an unmet need or issue that was affecting their community. In communicating and collaborating with MiH, many participants identified or issue which in being resolved would lead to the betterment of their community. The support and collaboration offered by MiH was found to be developed through connection to the CDW. This connection to the CDW allowed for the participants to explore and generate ideas, opportunities, and resources relevant to them and community unmet needs/issues. Additionally, some participants noted the benefit of developing a rapport between the CDW and the individual, with these participants citing this rapport as important in giving validation to their ideas, thereby providing opportunities to take their concept forward in various ways:

> *"I got to know [CDW] virtually by telephone, then email, then face-to-face, and we clicked…[CDW] helped with getting funding, suggested other places to get funding, and networking [opportunities], bringing new people [together] and strengthening networks" (T)*

> *"[CDWs] have been wonderful and have seen us get to where we are now. If it wasn't for them in the first place, I wouldn't have known how to go forward. They have been great at sharing information and potential connections" (GL)*

The support provided by the CDW (3.1) was found to extend beyond idea and concept generation, as Community Development Workers assisted participants in seeking resources and additional support for community actions. This was particularly important for participants who identified as being marginalised, as it was through the support of the CDW and the opportunities to develop networks to external resources and funding that their community actions could be taken forward. These actions were found to support the development of capacity within the wider community as participants took forward their ideas into actions (3.1):

> *"MiH have such an amazing easy to access grants programme, there are no hoops to jump through, the criteria make it simple and clear" (N)*

> *"Without MiH it wouldn't be here. MiH provided grants and support to set it up, Compass wouldn't have had the financials to provide the mentoring support or ways to provide the weekly help" (IT)*

> *"We knew that people would come if we had some basic facilities. So, a shed was built, and we were fortunate to secure funding ourselves in getting a compost toilet. People have bought their gardening skills, as well as how to be resilient and look after your wellbeing too" (M)*

Many participants further identified the importance of funding and resources, noting MiH as being integral in aiding their community-based groups and projects in accessing resources. These resources were discussed as often being beyond the immediate knowledgebase of the participant (3.2). Whilst funding was cited as an important resource, several participants discussed other equally important resources, including individual's time, networking opportunities with unknown organisations, and introductions to ongoing community-based work. Of the participants who identified these resources, they considered these connections to afford support within their communities, allowing access to often-untapped skills, resources and latent talents that existed within their local community (3.2). As participants discussed, once connections were made, these resources could positively influence making community-based groups and activities happen:

> *"The links that MiH have supported are to do with cementing community connections…the information MiH has supplied has helped highlight useful organisations and individuals working along similar green/environmental initiatives" (AW)*

"The project came together through a discussion with [individual]. We discovered that in his working career he was a master craftsman in the building trade. He talked about gothic architecture… This has led to the group activity which then led to taking positive action in preparing for an exhibition" (FL)

Collaboration between MiH and the participants was further discussed in relation to organisations and associations understanding the diversity of the local communities in which they were situated (3.3). Like access to funding and resources, many participants highlighted the impact of fostering connections outside of their immediate knowledgebase. Various participants cited MiH as supporting them in developing these connections with the wider community of organisation providers. Fostering these connections was found to afford the participants an awareness and appreciation of their community, their role in the community and their own value within the community (3.3). Several participants discussed the association and understanding of their wider community as supporting and enhancing their community engagement as resources became more widely available through connections. Where these resources were available, participants noted this as leading to the creation, or support of, new community groups and activities which they believed were of benefit to their community:

"MiH were critical connections for us because they helped us via their funding system to make connections and to apply for a greenhouse. This has been a game changer in the garden, much more than you can realise" (M)

"We connected with the chairman of Uckfield volunteer centre and engaged with the organisations [in] the wider areas of our community too. We have all become active members together…this gives us an opportunity to network and get our message out and to [be] aware of what other organisations are doing and how we can support each other" (PC)

"[MiH] helped with some of the connections that have then developed themselves further (independently of MiH, though MiH helped with introductions" (GL)

In summary, key finding 1 supports the credibility of 3.2, as the findings have demonstrated that those supported by the CDW connected with other community members in accessing untapped skills and resources, which led to the formation of groups and activities within their community around shared ideas and interests. Comparatively, 3.3 is only supported in-part by this key finding, as many participants identified appreciation of the diverse organisations and providers within their community and an appreciation of their value to the community. However, it was additionally found that participants understood this value, noting MiH's role in supporting community members in building capacity through enhancing engagement to previously unidentified and beneficial connections to resources.

It is important to note that whilst 3.1 was considered briefly in this finding, 3.1 was more closely associated with key finding 2 (below). Whilst key finding 1 supports the credibility of 3.1 in part, key finding 2 provides a greater discussion of this.

Refined Programme Theory

Confirmed 3.2: People involved in ABCD processes within their community connect with other residents and associations through the support of the community development worker about their interests which supports communities to access untapped skills, talents and resources and work together through exchanging assets leading to creating and setting up new groups and activities within the community

Refined 3.3: Communities house a range of community sector providers, organisations, and associations involved in activities and efforts which cut-across strategic policy agendas. *MiH supports the understanding, and connection with, this diverse structure through its Community Development Workers and the resources they introduce, leading to* a great awareness, and appreciation, of community role and value *between both organisation and individual*. This appreciation enhances the way in which people and communities are engaged by, and engage with, organisations and system partners, *developing previously unidentified and beneficial connections to resources*

Box 11: Confirmed and Refined theory (3.2, 3.3)

Key Finding 2: Developing Community Resilience and Neighbourhood-based Systems for Change

The collaborative role of MiH in identifying need and building capacity in communities across East Sussex arguably forms the foundation from which community actions are take forward. In discussion with the participants, it was found that these community actions led to community resilience and neighbourhood-based systems for change (3.1), which were both developed and supported by/within local communities. Many participants cited the bonds, relationships and trust that was developed between community members owing to participation in community groups as supporting community resilience. Through attending community groups, it was noted that a holistic understanding was formed of the ways in which communities can come together, working collaboratively to improve community health and wellbeing (3.1) whilst further reinforcing existing neighbourhood- and community-based systems for change. Several participants discussed examples of this, for instance noting the importance of community groups, particularly for disadvantaged and marginalised community members who might otherwise be disconnected from the wider community. To the participants, the community groups provided a safe and secure setting for interactions between like-minded individuals which fostered important social bonds:

> *"The group has been working together and achieving something collectively… They each had challenges that prevented them from being able to make the steps to engage with other people and build new relationships. Through being together and doing something, there was no pressure, there were able to build relationships through the outputs and celebrate each other's outputs" (FL)*

> *"The group itself consists of a core group of 6 people, all with varying mental health issues. Together we unite around the garden, and it brings us closer" (DP)*

> *"We have all met people who we would not have met otherwise. We can socialise. We can build genuine friendships too with people who are different to us. In a way, we can all bounce back, though the garden helps this period to be much shorter (so it doesn't take as long to be resilient) and this serves as a 'buffer' to challenges in life too" (M)*

Developing social bonds was further found to lead to trust and friendship between community members, both of which are important aspects in developing community resilience. The bonds between community members were cited as developing over time, affording community members to feel less isolated owing, more confident and assured by the friendships they developed within the community. Notably, some participants also found an appreciation for the importance of health and wellbeing, extending community resilience beyond their immediate community group in developing community spaces, groups and activities which supported people beyond their immediate community group:

> *"We have utilised a small space at the centre and converted a disused and neglected patch into a flower and veg patch. People in the flats above use it as a nook to be alone and sit outside in privacy, rather than in the town centre where it can get noisy and busy" (DP)*

The importance of this finding relates to the impact of MiH, as MiH indirectly support community resilience and community-based systems for change through engaging communities. To the participants, the support of MiH and the CDW aided in developing community groups, which these participants felt provided the foundation of community resilience within and the wider community. The support of MiH was further found to assist community members and community groups to work in a localised manner in making small, yet arguably significant, changes within their local community:

> *"We can provide resilience through the use of the garden when groups get together here to bounce back from situations and events (including Covid-19, though not only this). People can do this in groups, though they can also do this individually too when they have personal and sometimes internal struggles… We can sanction a 'space' as a community asset where people can gather" (M)*

> *"We started a soup kitchen, using the richness of different foods and cultural diversity in our group. We heard about the CDW and MiH and we used this opportunity to secure funding… We can use these opportunities for being resilient through the pandemic and within our communities where there are issues because of the social connection benefits. Many people come to use our kitchen and garden" (GL)*

> *"We gave [the individual] a lump of old limestone and he created a gothic pillar. This was a person who felt his life was redundant and he struggled to find his identity…suddenly he had this purpose again" (FL)*

In summary, key finding 2 supported 3.1 in-part, leading to the following refinement in providing a better understanding of community resilience and neighbourhood-based systems for change. In addition to the explanatory assumption, it was found that participants valued the rapport developed between themselves and the CDW in supporting their development of community groups and events. Additionally, the participants noted that community resilience was further developed through these groups and events as communities came together, forming an understanding of how they can work collaboratively to improve health and wellbeing whilst further developing a community-based system for change.

Unexpectedly, this key finding additionally highlighted community resilience as further supported through the friendships and social bonds which occurred as community members came together under a shared idea or interest, working collaboratively as part of a community-based group. This finding therefore led to the formation of a new theory (3.4):

3.4 (New): *The creation of new groups and activities within the local community developed by those connected with MiH provides opportunities for community members to connect and communicate around a shared interest. These groups provide the local community an informal setting within which they feel assured and comfortable through forming social bonds with other group members. These social bonds help foster community resilience through the development of friendship groups, which support community resilience beyond the immediate community group*

Refined Programme Theory:

Refined 3.1: ABCD is taken forward through MiH within communities in line with an agreed principle of partnership working to develop a collaborative asset-based approach to meeting the ambitions of communities across East Sussex. *The approach of ABCD in engaging people* in conversation about their community, their interests, passions, and what they would be willing to gift to support community efforts, with the support of, *and rapport developed with, the Community Development Worker*. These actions lead to the generation of ideas, opportunities, and solutions to community-relevant issues and sharing resources with other people and organisations. In turn, the capacity built within the community to take forward community actions *help to build community resilience through groups/activities which occur through community organisation, generating a holistic understanding of what communities can do together to improve health and wellbeing and result in community-based systems for change*

Box 12: Refined theory (3.1)

To conclude, from testing programme theory 3, the initial assumptions have been both confirmed (3.2), revised (3.1, 3.3) and led to a new theory (3.4) based on the experiences of those who have collaborated with, and been supported by, MiH. In testing these assumptions, we have a better understanding of how MiH builds capacity within communities to take forward community actions which help build community resilience, and neighbourhood-based systems for change. We found that MiH works through the connections developed between community members and the CDW, as the engagement of the CDW supports recognition of unmet needs and issues affecting local communities, supporting community members in generating ideas and solutions and developing capacity to take ideas forward. Community Development Workers additionally fostered connections to external organisations to identify and access latent resources. As community members took ideas forward, community resilience was built as bonds of friendship and trust were developed between community members. This finding has reach therefore in informing community resilience and developing communities to work together with MiH in supporting small yet significant changes within often marginalised communities, providing a positive impact in developing community resilience. Based on these findings, it has led to a refined overarching programme theory:

Programme Theory 3 (Refined):

MiH builds capacity within communities *in East Sussex through developing positive connections between community members and the CDW and supporting the identification of unmet needs and issues affecting the local community. With the support of the CDW, community members* take forward community actions*, developing bonds of friendship and trust. These bonds* help build community resilience *as community members come together to develop community*- and neighbourhood-based systems for change*, leading to small yet significant changes within their community*

Box 13: Overarching Programme Theory 3 (Refined)

Programme Theory 4 – Impacting on Health and Wellbeing
How and why MiH works to develop solutions which go on to improve individual mental health and wellbeing for people within their communities which creates healthier places where they live

This section draws upon the key findings emerging from the testing of programme theory 4 and its supporting explanatory statements and assumptions 4.1-4.6.

4.1 An appreciation for ABCD, and desire to work differently with, and within communities leads to thinking about how we enable communities to identify and utilise strengths which exist, though remain hidden, and how this can lead to people and communities developing and realising these solutions which go on to improve mental health and wellbeing of people within communities where ABCD is, and healthier places for people where they live. This can lead to more sustainable health outcomes for people and communities, and neighbourhoods feeling/being empowered through being able to make a difference to what is important

4.2 For people living within communities there are things that they care about or are issues for them where they live but feel unable to effect/improve it on their own. Taking ABCD forward through MiH can help to connect people less likely to have the skills, knowledge and support to make it happen in their lives with people who can support, which builds individual capacity connecting people to others who can help so people are more able to make change happen. If these skills are shared more widely within the community, and how to do it within the community, then they can tackle more issues within their community. In doing so this can reduce dependency on smaller, concentrated numbers of people/services within communities

4.3 For MiH to generate wider community participation in the longer term, there is a need to respond to the immediate needs of people within communities. This can help build trust, support and people having the space to think about and identify assets within communities which lead to alleviating immediate stresses and worries amongst people within communities, and a platform is created for co-designing projects and activities that embody, and are owned by, the community

4.4 People involved in ABCD processes within their community are supported to connect with other residents and organisations and (re)act on things they want to take forward; this leads to people coming together and being more involved in creating positive change which build trust and confidence between stakeholders as they take actions forward which results in building more resilience and integrated communities as community capacity and capability strengthens

4.5 If MiH works with people and communities in identified areas of East Sussex, where there may be less access to certain resources and more likely to experience certain inequalities ABCD can lead to identifying and sharing hidden/existing assets and bringing people together with shared interests and passions within communities. This brings people together and leads to forming relationships, and a can-do attitude within their community which can enable self-help, different stakeholders being able to work together, and alter-reduce-delay demand for service provisions, creating a good culture within communities where MiH is

4.6 People involved in ABCD processes within their community are supported to be involved in conversations with other residents and organisations resulting in people sharing ideas and opportunities through relationships which leads to problem solving and solutions being generated for the community as people have assets, networks, and connections to support

Box 14: Assumptions under test

Following the analysis of the How and Why conversations, two key findings emerged associated with programme theory 4:

1. Empowering communities to make a change

2. Strengthening capacity and capability in creating healthier communities

Both key findings are explained through, and supported by quotes from the data, and linked to each relevant assumption, finalising in a confirmed, refined, or refuted programme theory.

Key Finding 1: Empowering Communities to Make a Change

Key finding 1 focuses on the role of MiH in supporting communities to develop, and providing ongoing support with, community groups which empowered community members to improve their mental health and wellbeing, making their communities a healthier place to live. A few participants discussed identifying issues and challenges within their community which impacted on both their personal mental health and wellbeing and wider, holistic mental health and wellbeing of the community. Where the participants understood the impact of mental health and wellbeing issues, they felt it was important to identify ways in which these issues could be resolved (4.2):

"Self-confidence flags when people are lonely. Some have physical issues and are in pain, but pain becomes their life, and they say they can't do anything – they become withdrawn and isolated. If we can help them overcome their hurdles, it brings back the real person. They start to have fun" (F)

"It has been mentally depressing during lockdown. So, we have had the opportunity to meet people, see people, and listen to people. We can do this by serving food and drink. We can build and link social activities to this and increase from weekdays to weekends potentially" (GL)

It was found that MiH was most impactful in supporting the development of solutions to issues identified by community members, as MiH were noted as supporting participants in strengthening their resilience and capacity within the community to take meaningful actions forward. Throughout their discussion, participants cited MiH and the CDW as being central in identifying community-based resources for use. These resources were often hidden, unknown to the participant (4.1) until highlighted by MiH. These pivotal resources included untapped skills, knowledge and support of community members in addition to identifying important social networks and connections within and outside of the local community (4.1 and 4.2):

"We have linked with neighbours further down the street…this interaction has enabled [CDW] to introduce external networks and sources into the existing community-based work going on" (H)

"To be honest, MiH and ABCD is a fantastic facility for us all. In this world, money is God. When you are talking to people who have lost confidence, their ability to do something, for some reason, the idea of getting a small grant can give them some belief" (FL)

"We have the opportunities to build workshops too and to connect with diverse groups, including the young and the older and bring us all together. For example, there are youth groups and a school right next door. They are really interested in doing something with us which is great" (M)

Some participants noted MiH as fostering introductions within the community (4.6), which the participants felt supported them (in conjunction with community members) toward implementing change as both the participant and community group developed capacity and solutions (4.2) through sharing ideas and opportunities with their wider community (4.6). One participant discussed an example of this, noting a community member who had previously been homeless as connecting with a co-produced community group which empowered the community member to make a positive change:

> *"I bumped into a person recently who I have not seen for years. We went for a coffee. The person said they knew they could 'burden' me. He said: 'it's as if you laid the ground for me being able to reach out to you when I was in crisis'…because the relationship was built through the asset-based work years ago, we had a connection with the language to connect, to know the experience (living in poverty with no bathroom) and knowing this wasn't someone's fault" (FL)*

> *"He found his own solution and our approach is for people to do this. We lay the ground in ABCD to connect, build relationships and be approachable in the future when people have needs…[if] someone truly understands asset-based then they place themselves in the community and they become potential as well. So, if someone in the community wants help and doesn't have a network of support, then they know where to go" (FL)*

In developing their capacity for change, participants (who varied in age and characteristics) cited feeling more able to tackle issues within the community, often to the betterment of community mental health and wellbeing. The impact of the recent global pandemic of COVID-19 was found to have significant impact on participants' mental health and wellbeing; however, in having the capacity to enact change, the participants viewed themselves as empowered in developing solutions to overcome challenges that affected their community (4.6) whilst supporting community mental health and wellbeing (4.1). There was further evidence that participants retained their resilience and empowerment when facing unforeseen challenges, with the beneficial impact of the community groups on mental health and wellbeing supporting the participants in continuing in the face of adversity:

> *"During COVID, the [community group] was giving equipment and materials to residents, and there are claims around the benefits this had from people on social media posting on how [the community group] has been for their mental health and wellbeing, and isolation/loneliness" (T)*

> *"We have had a few hurdles along the way: COVID, weather, red tape at the centre for the use of tools and poor health of some participants. We haven't let is stop us though" (DP)*

> *"The insider's guide sessions the [MiH] grant supports is made to be a resilience tool and offer people coping strategies when dealing with mental health and practical day-to-day things that come up when living with a child with SEN" (N)*

> *"There is a man who is bi-polar, he is loved by everyone. He has a brilliant mind. He really wants to start a chess club. He talks about it and when he is ready for it, he can go for a grant. He's been developing an awareness of others in the community, and he is connecting by having conversations with other chess players and planting seeds in their mind too. Wouldn't it be lovely where everyone in this area plays chess? You have the reality of this grant to help make this happen" (FL)*

In summary, key finding 1 supports the credibility of 4.1 and 4.2 in-part. Owing to overlap between these assumptions and the findings, these assumptions have been refined into 3.1. Comparatively, 4.6 was found to be supported by the participant conversations. The refinement and confirmation of these assumptions have informed a greater understanding of how communities are empowered to make change. Throughout the discussion, many participants identified MiH as empowering them to make their community a healthier place. This was particularly important for mental health and wellbeing where participants had identified a need within the community. MiH was found to be fundamental in supporting the participants in creating solutions to strengthen individual and community resilience, supporting participant capacity to take actions forward and identifying latent resources within the community. The actions of MiH were found to support participants as they cited feeling empowered and resilient when challenges arose.

Revised Programme Theory

Refined 4.1: *For people living in communities where MiH is*, there are *issues* where they live that they feel unable to effect on their own. *Taking ABCD forward through MiH can help* identify and utilise existing, yet hidden, *resources, helping to connect people* in realising *and developing* solutions. *These solutions* build individual capacity*, empowering communities to make change happen*. *Consequently, communities can take on and* tackle more issues within their community, improving *individual and* community mental health and wellbeing

Confirmed 4.6: People involved in ABCD processes within their community are supported to be involved in conversations with other residents and organisations resulting in people sharing ideas and opportunities through relationships which leads to problem solving and solutions being generated for the community as people have assets, networks, and connections to support

Box 15: Refined and confirmed theory (4.1, 4.6)

Key Finding 2: Strengthening Capacity and Capability in Creating Healthier Communities

As has been discussed previously, participants noted the various ways in which MiH supported community members to interact and develop social networks and connections beyond their immediate understanding (4.4). Given the role of MiH in identifying these connections and resources, it can be suggested that community members were often unaware of resources available to them. With the support of MiH, a shared understanding of community context was found to be developed, as participants noted communities coming together under a shared idea or interest (4.5) and working together to enact positive changes within their community (4.4). Additionally, many participants noted the interactions between community members and outside organisations and agencies as supporting positive change as trust and confidence was fostered between these groups (4.4). In turn, the participants discussed these positive interactions as fostering their 'can-do' attitude within their community (4.5) as community members were cited as enacting upon self-help behaviours (4.5):

> *"They bloom and blossom and get involved in other things. The members obviously get so much from attending the group… members often arrive early to a group; one person came an hour early as they said they had nowhere else to go" (F)*

"When you are frustrated about something in life, you come, you pick up a shovel, you dig, you create something. This is a huge benefit to us as community members. This garden serves many, many purposes" (M)

"MiH supplied the funding which has enabled us to start our project off. A few members of the group are quite resourceful and have been able to acquire more items that didn't matter if they were new" (DP)

With respect to self-help, the discussions of the participants build upon the findings of programme theory 1, in their suggestion that demand for service provisions can be lowered in communities where MiH is available to support self-helping behaviours (4.5). It was found that empowered individuals supported one-another, creating a supportive and resilient community in which capacity and capability was strengthened (4.4). The shift from reliance on outside organisations and services toward self-help and community support was highlighted by one participant as having a positive impact on community mental health and wellbeing in their socioeconomically deprived, leading to positive perceptions of the local community:

"Over the COVID period people have had to find their way through with help from neighbours and groups like this, they have had to shift their way of thinking and that has helped empower communities and a slow spread of positivity that has been needed in towns like Newhaven that have felt in the past a bit of a 'dumping ground'. Newhaven is becoming a healthier place to live in as much as there is support out there now and not necessarily the big services where there might be months or years of waiting in some cases" (N)

It was further apparent from the data that MiH and the CDW were considered by participants as the catalyst from which community capacity and capability were developed and strengthened. For the participants, the foundations which MiH provide in the form of networks, connections and resources were fundamental to supporting mental health and wellbeing within the community, thereby making their communities a healthier place to live:

"The garden [community-based project] itself offers a peaceful island in the middle of the Newhaven one-way system… The garden is a sport that people can meet outside and feel safe in. It has brought a few people that come to the garden out of their shells and talking more about their problems with friends, which in turn has helped them feel less isolated" (DP)

"We get a lot of issues with parents parking in residential roads. We have introduced a system where children are walking into school, and this overcomes the parking problem and we have sold it as a healthy thing to do… We will continue to encourage this, and it's been good for the community and solved an issue. We have bounced back from the problem with a productive solution. It's made the community more safe (and therefore healthier)" (PC)

In summary, key finding 2 supports the credibility of both 4.4 and 4.5, confirming these tested assumptions, whilst providing a deeper understanding of how communities become healthier through strengthened capacity and capability. Within this finding, MiH and the CDW were identified as the catalyst for developing and strengthening community capacity and capability, whilst further identifying previously unknown resources. MiH was further discussed as supporting both participants and community members in coming together to enact positive change, fostering a 'can-do' attitude, and enabling self-help. This was found to reduce demand for services as community members felt empowered to support one-another, making their community healthier.

Confirmed Programme Theory

Confirmed 4.4 People involved in ABCD processes within their community are supported to connect with other residents and organisations and (re)act on things they want to take forward; this leads to people coming together and being more involved in creating positive change which build trust and confidence between stakeholders as they take actions forward which results in building more resilience and integrated communities as community capacity and capability strengthens

Confirmed 4.5 If MiH works with people and communities in identified areas of East Sussex, where there may be less access to certain resources and more likely to experience certain inequalities ABCD can lead to identifying and sharing hidden/existing assets and bringing people together with shared interests and passions within communities. This brings people together and leads to forming relationships, and a can-do attitude within their community which can enable self-help, different stakeholders being able to work together, and alter-reduce-delay demand for service provisions, creating a good culture within communities where MiH is

Box 16: Confirmed theory (3.4, 3.5)

It should be noted that there was no evidence to support the confirmation of 3.3. Consequently, this assumption has been refuted at the current time. It is possible that with further testing and data collection, that this assumption may be accepted or refined. However, at the current time, there is no evidence to support this theory and it is therefore refuted.

Refuted Programme Theory

Refuted 4.3: *For MiH to generate wider community participation in the longer term, there is a need to respond to the immediate needs of people within communities. This can help build trust, support and people having the space to think about and identify assets within communities which lead to alleviating immediate stresses and worries amongst people within communities, and a platform is created for co-designing projects and activities that embody, and are owned by, the community*

Box 17: Refuted theory (4.3)

To conclude, from the testing of programme theory 4, initial assumptions have subsequently been confirmed (4.4, 4.5, 4.6), refined (4.1), and refuted (4.3) owing to lack of current evidence. In testing these theories, we have a greater understanding of how and why MiH works in developing solutions which go on to improve individual mental health and wellbeing for people within their communities, which create healthier places where they live. We found that as communities came together around a shared idea, MiH and the CDW were integral to supporting community members in empowering change to health, wellbeing and mental health within communities. In co-creating community groups, capacity for change was developed amongst community members, as community members felt empowered by the support of MiH, leading to a 'can-do' attitude in enacting and supporting self-helping behaviours. In being empowered, community members were resilient when facing adversity, developing and implementing solutions to challenges affecting the health and wellbeing of their community. This finding has reach in understanding how community members support one-another, leading to less demand for service provisions as community capacity and capability was strengthened through self-helping behaviours. The impact of this research is the creation of healthier communities in which people live. Based on these findings, this has led to a refined overarching programme theory:

Refined Programme Theory 4 – Impacting on Health and Wellbeing:

MiH works *in East Sussex through supporting community members as they come together to* develop solutions *to individual- and community-related health and wellbeing issues, empowering community members with a 'can-do' attitude as they enact and support self-helping behaviours. In supporting one-another, there is less demand for service provisions as community capacity and capability is strengthened, leading to* improved individual *and community* mental health and wellbeing, which creates healthier places where they live

Box 18: Overarching Programme Theory 4 (Refined)

Table: Overview of confirmed, refined and refuted programme theory assumptions

Programme Theory	Untested Explanatory Assumptions and Beliefs	Tested Explanatory Assumptions and Beliefs – Confirmed, Refined, Refuted
Refined Programme theory 1 – Building Foundations to Achieve Goals: MiH works *in East Sussex through building the foundations to co-productively support community members to achieve their goals through improving and fostering* self-efficacy, wellbeing and social capital within *the community, as community members come together around a shared sense of purpose to work toward a community-benefitting, shared goal*	1.1	1.1 – Refined
	1.2	1.2 – Confirmed
Refined Programme Theory 2 – Making Connections: MiH works *in East Sussex through providing a greater* awareness of what else exists in the community, *being a valued source of information in connecting community members together around shared ideas. As people become more aware of what exists in the community, MiH supports community members in* generating change in the diversity and typology of people's social networks *through fostering* connections within the community *and providing opportunities to positively influence community decisions, and identify and engage with resources community resources*	2.1	2.1 – Confirmed
	2.2	2.2 – Confirmed
	2.3	2.3 – Refined
	2.4	2.4 – Confirmed
	2.5	2.5 – Confirmed
	2.6	2.6 – Confirmed
	2.7	2.7 – Refined

Programme Theory	Untested Explanatory Assumptions and Beliefs	Tested Explanatory Assumptions and Beliefs – Confirmed, Refined, Refuted
Refined Programme Theory 3 – Communities Taking the Lead: MiH builds capacity within communities *in East Sussex through developing positive connections between community members and the CDW and supporting the identification of unmet needs and issues affecting the local community. With the support of the CDW, community members* take forward community actions*, developing bonds of friendship and trust. These bonds* help build community resilience *as community members come together to develop community-* and neighbourhood-based systems for change*, leading to small yet significant changes within their community*	3.1	3.1 – Refined
	3.2	3.2 – Confirmed
	3.3	3.3 – Refined
		3.4 - New
Refined Programme Theory 4 – Impacting on Health and Wellbeing: MiH works *in East Sussex through supporting community members as they come together to* develop solutions *to individual- and community-related health and wellbeing issues, empowering community members with a 'can-do' attitude as they enact and support self-helping behaviours. In supporting one-another, there is less demand for service provisions as community capacity and capability is strengthened, leading to* improved individual *and community* mental health and wellbeing, which creates healthier places where they live	4.1	4.1 – Refined with 3.2
	4.2	
	4.3	4.3 – Refuted
	4.4	4.4 – Confirmed
	4.5	4.5 – Confirmed
	4.6	4.6 – Confirmed

Exploration of the Emerging Survey Findings[7]

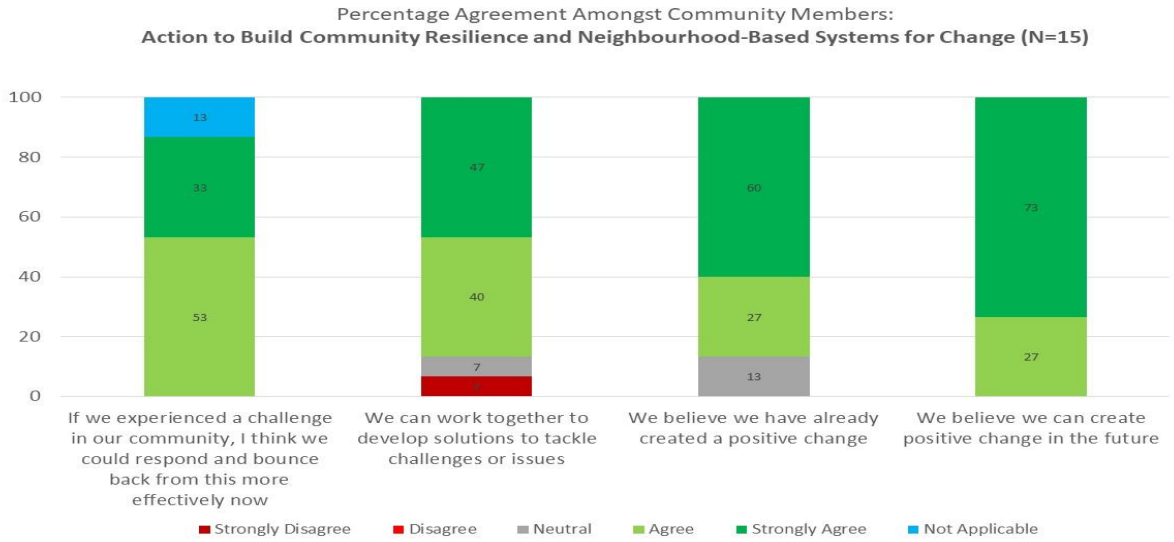
The evaluation team worked within the Making it Happen core group to produce an initial community member survey[8]. Data collection from community members using survey distribution is ongoing. Currently, the Making it Happen Manager and CDW Team Leader are working collaboratively with the evaluation team to stay informed about the survey responses. Over time, the MiH partners will be able to use the information to inform their evidence base and knowledge exchange (including sharing this information with community members); and to further develop the evaluative capacity to lead with developing methods of data collection (such as surveys and how and why conversations (or interviews)).

Programme Theory 1 – Communities Taking the Lead: How and why MiH builds capacity within communities to take forward community action which helps build community resilience, and neighbourhood-based systems for change - Survey Responses

The trusting bonds that were mobilised through friendships and the development of relationships were perceived as being important to the development of community resilience. Agreement amongst the survey responders was high with 86% of community members saying they could work together to develop solutions to tackle challenges or issues and 87% saying that they could respond and bounce back to challenges *even more effectively* as a result of their activities. Similarly, 87% of respondents said that they had already created positive change within their neighbourhoods and 100% said they believed they could create positive change in the future. A small number of respondents were consistently neutral or did not consider that one of the survey questions was relevant to them (13%). One person disagreed that working together to tackle challenges was possible (7%). There is scope to adapt the survey to add a section to ask respondents if they would like to provide any context for their answers. This could help partners to understand how and why some people, albeit a minority, do not experience their community activities in the same way as others.

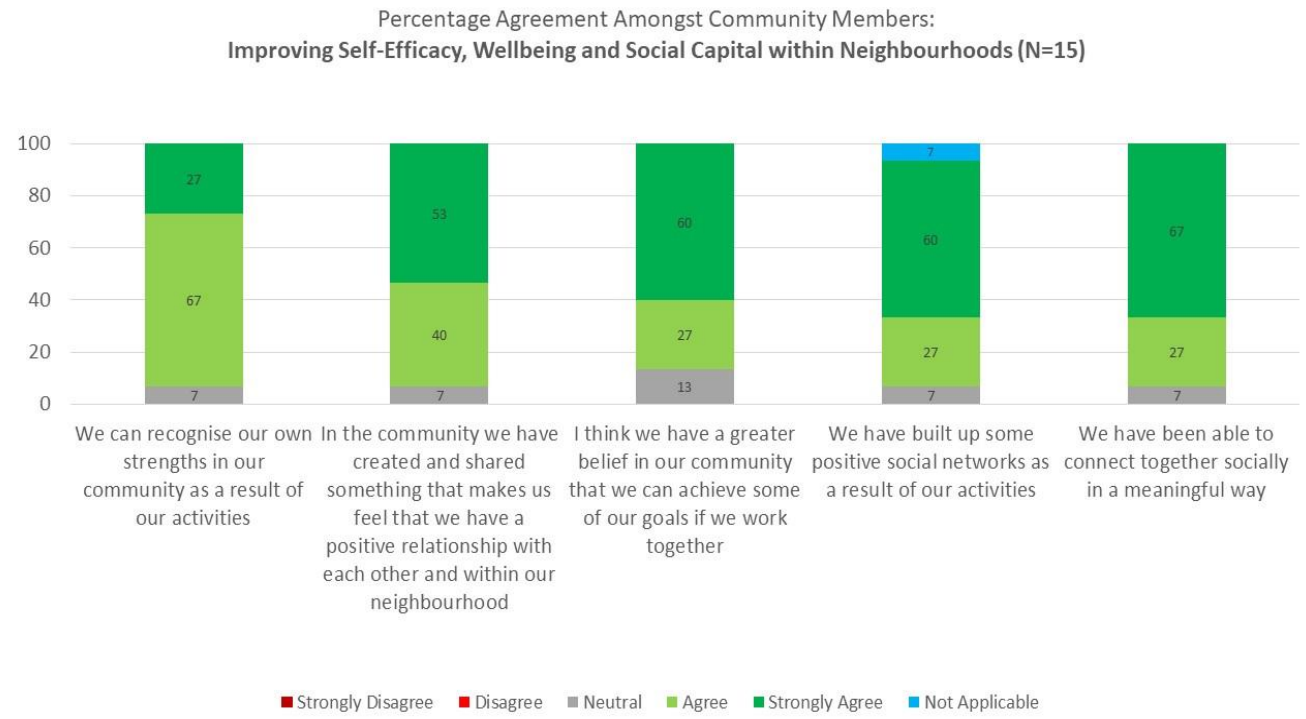
[7] The emerging survey findings were aligned to the programme theories, as outlined in the headings in this section of the report. The survey findings have been presented separately in this report for two reasons: 1. To provide the year two report 'space' to reflect on how the survey items (questions) will have changed and were adapted with time (surveys were bought forward in the evaluation to enable some of this emerging data to feature in the report) and 2. The survey questions were asked to lend the analysis to summarise programme theory 'testing' in a global and general way for readers who might be interested in this level of analysis (for example Community Development Workers) and at the request of community members.

[8] This is the first version of the community member survey. As a method to collect data about community member perspective's around their ABCD activities, events, groups and projects, this is the first iteration of the survey. The evaluation and Making it Happen partners can continue to work together to develop a longer and shorter version of the survey and to adapt it over time. The important priorities are to collaborate in the development of methods, to engage community members in evidence gathering and to learn about the Making it Happen programme in relation to what works, for whom, under what circumstances and why.



Programme theory 2 – Building Foundations to Achieve Goals: How and why MiH works to improve self-efficacy, wellbeing, and social capital within neighbourhoods

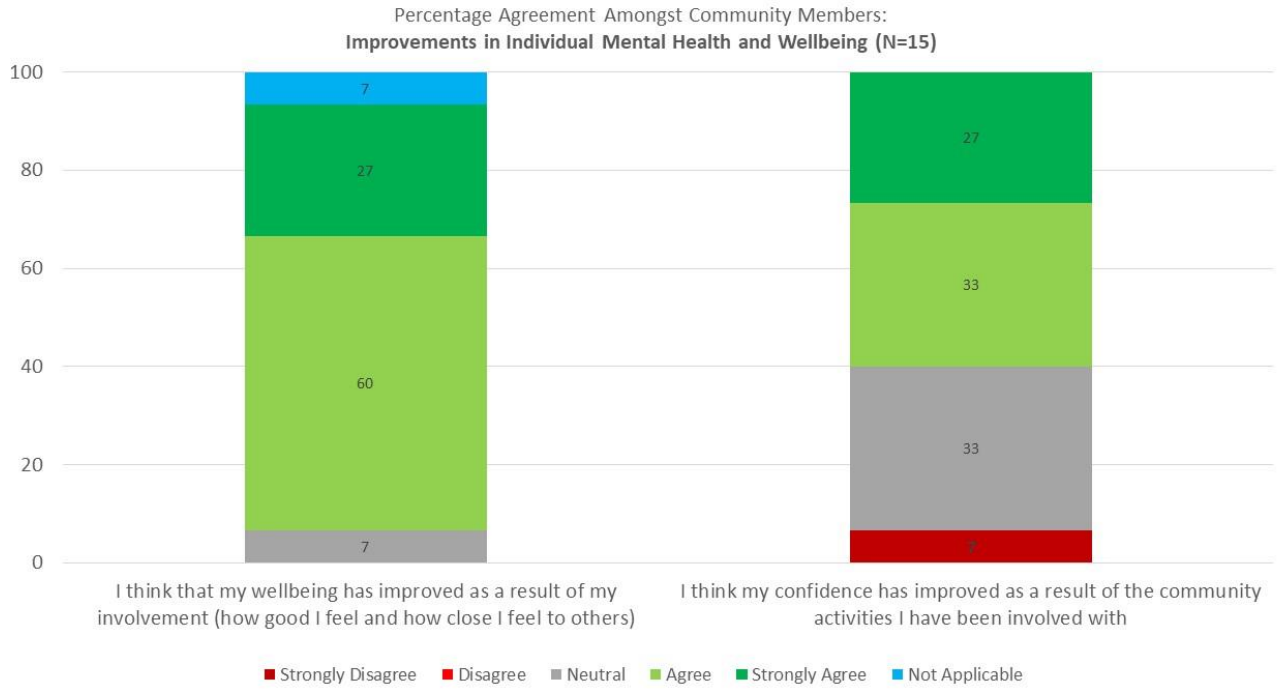
To engage in ABCD through Making it Happen, people who relate to their community share ideas and skills around their interests. Agreement amongst the survey responders was high with 93% of community members saying they could recognise their collective strengths, positivity within the community and connect socially in meaningful ways. 87% of the responders said they had a greater belief that goals could be achieved now, by working together within their communities. The remaining respondents neither agreed or disagreed with these perspectives or that the outcome that related to building positive social networks was applicable to them. The reason provided in the 'how and why' conversations with community members was attributed in part to the enthusiasm of the Community Development Workers. The Community Development Workers assisted people to identify resources for themselves, whilst empowering them to be motivated and take action as they gained a sense of purpose. These experiences and connections are synonymous with self-efficacy, and community wellbeing which is about feeling collectively close to others in the community and being able to develop further social networks or social capital within the neighbourhood.



Programme Theory 3 – Impacting on Health and Wellbeing: How and why MiH works to develop solutions which go on to improve individual mental health and wellbeing for people within their communities which creates healthier places where they live

The people who engaged with ABCD through Making it Happen provided support to each other and community members empower themselves to achieve changes and to begin to identify their strengths. A key influence in mobilising this approach comes from the Community Development Workers (CDWs) who have been perceived as having a pivotal role in supporting people to identify resources and fostering social networking opportunities. Feeling good about self and close to others were important components of individual wellbeing and 85% of respondents said their personal wellbeing had improved as a result of their engagement in the community activities. One respondent did not agree or disagree with this outcome (7%) and one person felt that the outcome area was not applicable to them (7%).

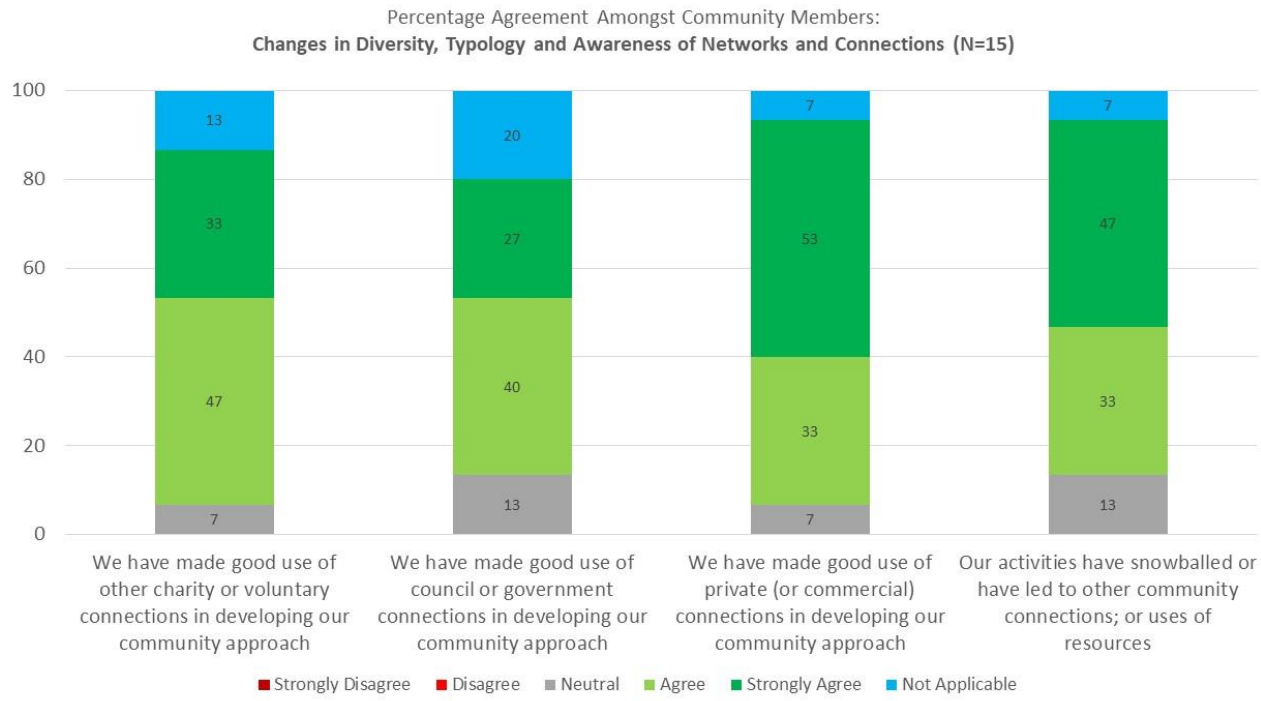
Interestingly, when community members were asked about the survey outcome criteria, some remarked that when an area was scored as 'neutral' or 'not applicable', it may be because the outcome was already happening, so cannot be fully attributed to Making it Happen at that point. A greater percentage of respondents were neutral as to whether their personal confidence had improved through their community activities (33%) and one person disagreed completely that their confidence had improved (7%). However, given that outcomes such as wellbeing, resilience, social connections and the power to achieve change were so strong, it may be that confidence follows emotional experience and awareness about achievements. This is something that can be explored in further 'how and why' conversations.



Programme Theory 4 – Making Connections: How and why MiH works to generate changes in the diversity and typology of people's social networks, connections within their community, and awareness of what else exists within their community

The ABCD principles in East Sussex were mobilised through Making it Happen where Community Development Workers have facilitated the initial processes of encouraging people to identify the resources and opportunities. The majority of the respondents agreed that they made good use of the diverse types of connections that they identified. For example, 80% connected with charity and voluntary organisations, 67% of respondents made good use of council or government connections and 86% made good use of private or commercial connections as they developed their community approaches. The how and why conversations in the analyses above and the case studies below provide examples of the impact from this outcome and the substantive meaning for the community activities, groups and projects. The remaining respondents said that the connections were either not applicable to them or they neither agreed nor disagreed that these different types of connections were made. A similar pattern followed where 80% of the respondents said that connections and use of resources had snowballed when thinking about their community activities. In future data collection, it would be interesting to explore why some community members do not perceive that making good use of the diverse connections is applicable to them (up to 20% of respondents). It may be that the survey respondents engage in different aspects of the community projects and groups they engage with and this awareness of what is available does not fall within their specific activities. There may be approaches that other communities can share about the potential benefits of connecting and snowballing with others who have access to resources and assets, where everyone can benefit one another.

Certainly, the how and why conversations demonstrated that wide and diverse community connection and building was beneficial to lead to outcomes such as friendship developments, feeling valued (self-worth), belief in achieving goals (efficacy), wellbeing, health and resilience.

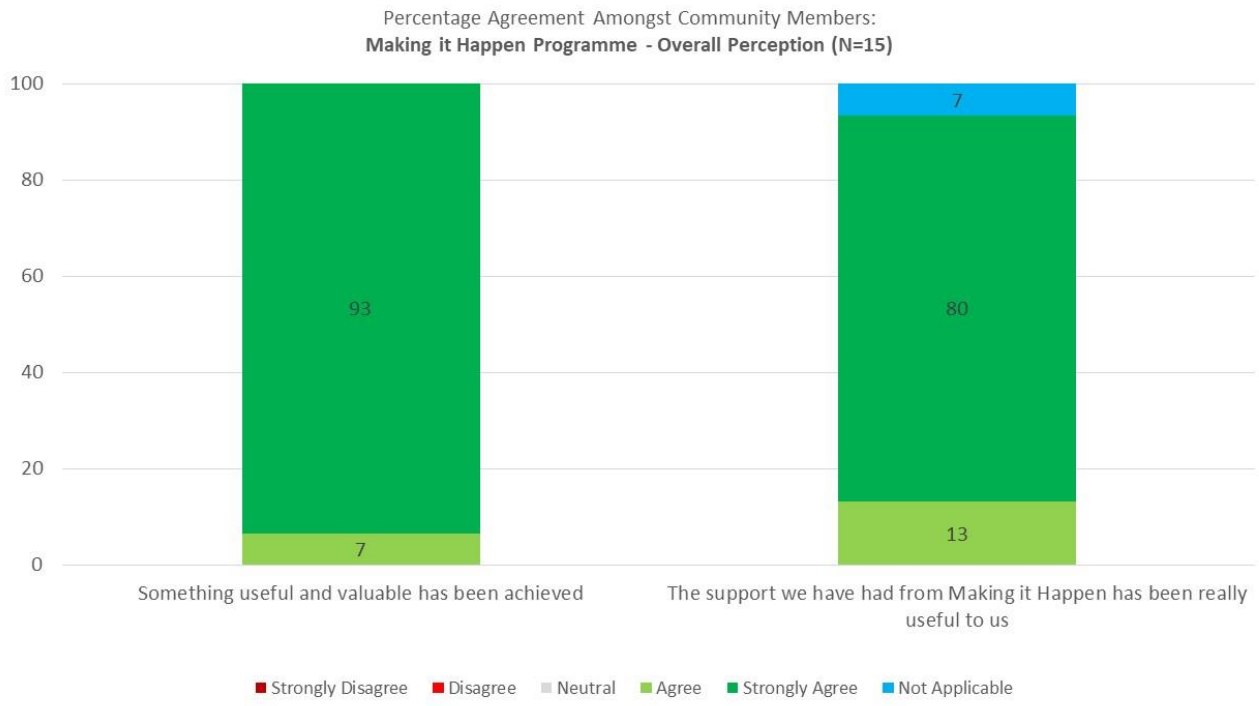


Summary

In this phase of the evaluation, the first set of programme theories were tested and refined. The development of a survey that contributes to the testing of these programme theories alongside the key objectives of the Making it Happen programme was implemented to support this process. Whilst the interpretation of the findings is tentative, there is an opportunity to continually review the respondent's outcomes and to further shape the survey approach over time.

Each of the four programme theories was supported by the perspectives provided by the respondents. In other words, as Making it Happen has cast its net more widely in the community, the emerging picture from survey respondents continues to support the overarching programme theories. As the bar chart that follows indicates, what is most encouraging is that all the respondents said they agreed that something useful and valuable has been achieved through their community activity, group or project, that Making it Happen connected with. Whilst one person was not connected to a project in a way that enabled them to assess how useful the Making it Happen support was (hence 7% of the responses was 'not applicable'), the remaining 93% of respondents agreed that the support was really useful.

These findings are emerging, though strong. The survey remains open for data collection and adaptation and further data will be collected and analysed over this next evaluation phase.


Percentage Agreement Amongst Community Members:
Making it Happen Programme - Overall Perception (N=15)
100
80
60
40
20
0
93
7
7
80
13
Something useful and valuable has been achieved
The support we have had from Making it Happen has been really useful to us
Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly Agree
Not Applicable

Bringing Making it Happen to Life Through Case Study Examples of the Assets in the Partnership Areas

Introductory comment

Case-studies are a valuable method and source of data, as they allow us to follow the footsteps of Making it Happen in action with different communities, engaging and involving different groups of people, in different ways, and lead to different outcomes. The case-studies therefore helped to bring to life what is going on within communities. In relation to our evaluation, the case-studies provided valuable supporting data in relation to testing each of the programme theories, and how they intersect with the primary data we have generated through the other methods we used during this phase of the evaluation. This set of case studies underscores the pre-existing capacity within Making it Happen to produce useful examples of evidence through a blended approach to the generation of data that is important to the evaluation and the understanding of programme impact.

Shining a light on how Making It Happen makes connections through assets

Making it Happen encourages people to develop friendships and wider, more diverse, social networks for support. Community Development Workers (CDWs) connect people with their neighbours, those with similar interests, those with specialist knowledge or experience, but also with the wealth of places, opportunities and resources available locally that can support them to achieve their goals. The following provide illustrations using examples from the programme.

Walshes Park, Crowborough: In Crowborough, the team have made the most of Walshes Park as a fantastic asset for the area. They are working with the Park Manager – who is keen to encourage wider use of the park – to facilitate engagement activity to involve park users in plans for the future. The team connected the Park Manager with a volunteer from a successful local Forest Garden for ideas and inspiration. They are now supporting connections between the local Community Association with the park and are planning a collaborative engagement event in the spring.

Women of Vision, Bexhill: In Bexhill, Community Development Workers have worked with a local resident wanting to set up a support group for women who don't speak English as a first language. The resident is keen to provide a safe space for the women to meet for mutual support, to build confidence and improve their English language skills. The team have worked with her to access a grant, find a venue, identify training needs, and with ideas to support the promotion of the group.

Rye Community Garden, Rother: The group were already aware of the benefits of the garden for its members. They worked with the CDW on plans to encourage more and different users of the garden. The CDW connected them with Rye Hub on the Hill and the local Primary School. She put them in touch with Camber Community Garden for peer support and supported their application for a grant. They bought a greenhouse, creating a covered space for gardening, which makes the garden more accessible.

SEN Parent Support Group, Newhaven: A local parent was inspired by peer support training she had attended delivered by another local parent with support from Amaze. Community Development Workers worked with her to make connections to other local services including youth organisations, support services and The VRAC project, founded on the principle 'it takes a village to raise a child' led by East Sussex Community Voice. Community Development Workers supported her in an application for a grant to cover basic costs. The group provides a safe space for mutual support and friendship.

The Library of Things, Hastings: The Library of Things is a way for people to borrow things they need, rather than buy. Members browse online and choose what they want – a cake tin, a carpet cleaner, a drill – then book a collection spot and pick up their "things" from an accessible space in the centre of town. The group was successful in obtaining a Small Spark grant from Making it Happen to support the development of the library.

Illustrating how Making It Happen fosters relationships

Building relationships with people is crucial to understanding the local area, the social and cultural history of an area, and priorities for local people.

Community Development Workers (CDWs) seek to build relationships with key people – or 'connectors' – in their neighbourhoods. Making these key connections is crucial to ensuring there is an appetite and a welcome for the Making it Happen approach. Community Development Workers then spend time getting to know the places that matter to people and the spaces where people meet. They created opportunities to start conversations, such as through pop up events and by asking powerful questions to tap into people's interests and passions.

Connecting with local Councillors

In Hampden Park, the CDW team met with Councillor 'JB', who grew up in the area.

He told them about campaigns important to local people including measures to reduce speeding around schools. They discussed local area decision making, how the train track acts as a divider to the community, which dilutes the sense of a village and stifles community spirit.

He made suggestions for more people to connect to, including a bakery working to support victims of people-trafficking, churches, shops, community centres, places to go walking and regular events. He introduced them to the Shed – an intergenerational project led by Age Concern – which offers a wide range of activities and projects which has become a key connection for the team.

Supporting local events

Community Development Workers will regularly attend and support local events. Sometimes this is an opportunity to chat to people informally, and sometimes – if appropriate or invited – Community Development Workers book a stall or take leaflets.

As lockdown restrictions lifted last summer, the CDW for Eastern Rother went along to a number of open garden events:

"The 'open Gardens' are a valuable way to engage with local residents. The learning I took was how this relatively low key event had not actually cost anyone any money, and they still managed to put on a lovely 'Covid' safe event with just the good will of neighbours." (RVA CDW)

In Uckfield the CDW booked a stall at the Uckfield Festival to meet local residents, as well as local organisations and charities, and to promote Making it Happen:

"I was surprised to find that despite heavy downpours, the event was busy. What did not surprise me was the sense of community and the buzzing atmosphere. Lots of people were stopping to chat under umbrellas and many stall holders knew each other." (AIRS CDW)

Starting conversations

In Willingdon Trees the CDW spent time walking around the patch chatting to people: *"I was able to stop and talk to people about my role and their thoughts and ideas about living in Willingdon Trees." (3VA CDW) The* 'Just Say Hello' newsletter provided feedback about ideas emerging for things people wanted to get started. These included foraging, jam making, singing, dancing and carpentry.

In Shinewater and Willingdon Trees, Community Development Workers used a 'wishing tree' at public events to collect resident's ideas, interests and priorities. In Newhaven the team attended local events, such as the Fish Festival and a RNLI event, and encouraged people to share memories, knowledge and ideas for the future. A large-scale map of the area was used for people to plot local assets, activities and things to do.

Challenges gathered by the Making it Happen programme manager and the Community Development Worker team leader

This approach can be difficult when there are individuals or organisations that perceive themselves to be 'the' representatives of the local community, who then discourage wider engagement. Sometimes this reflects **historical frustration** with initiatives that residents feel have been imposed. In other cases, local organisations are focused on maintaining their services, and view all others as **competition** to be 'seen off'. Community Development Workers have worked hard to demonstrate principles and values which seek to work alongside communities rather than do 'to' or 'for' them.

It can be challenging when other services working in the locality do not work in the same way. Many funding opportunities are **driven by data**, which larger organisations can respond to quickly. There have been occasions where Community Development Workers have worked alongside people keen to build a community response to a local issue, only for an organisation to access funding to set up a service to address it themselves. This has caused frustration and disillusionment for people on the ground, but it also misses a huge opportunity to **collaborate or co-produce** with local residents.

Community Development Workers have flagged challenges around knowing **when to 'step back'**. Active listening is crucial for Community Development Workers to respond and reflect appropriately, and work at the pace of an individual or community. This can be challenging in a Public funded programme which, inevitably, requires speedy **evidence of outcomes** to justify spend. There may be varying **expectations, drive and skills** within the community, which affect the pace a project can move, making for a bumpy ride for everyone.

Every area is different. Some Making it Happen neighbourhoods are in relatively inaccessible areas on the edge of a town, with little local infrastructure. Some are more rural and can feel isolated, while others are in central areas, where residents feel weary and sometimes angry about programmes and initiatives that have come and gone. Across all these neighbourhoods there is often a sense of feeling **forgotten or ignored**. Each scenario presents a challenge for Community Development Workers.

Finally, **COVID** has presented an enormous challenge for a programme which is fundamentally about building relationships. Community Development Workers have used ingenious ways and means to find ways to meet people virtually and by creating COVID safe opportunities outside, but without any doubt – as for everyone – lockdowns have made a difficult job infinitely harder.

Evidencing how Making it Happen promotes individual and community health and wellbeing

Art, creativity, mental health and wellbeing

In **Willingdon Trees** Community Development Workers were approached by Compass Arts who was working with a local resident. The resident wanted to set up a network and pop up studio for people interested in art who were struggling with their mental health during lockdown. The CDW worked with her to apply for funding and supported her to promote her idea to other local residents. The funding included mentoring from Compass Arts to build her confidence to run the group with another resident. The group has been running for over a year and has a regular in person session. They recently put on an exhibition of their work and successfully made an application for a larger grant.

Compass has taken an asset-based approach to mentoring the resident, who has grown in confidence. She was recently offered an apprenticeship, which she had previously applied for without success. She is clear that the mentoring support from Compass Arts to run the group is the reason her confidence has grown and is determined to continue to lead and develop the **Pop-up Art Studio**.

Craft, relaxation, friendship and peer support

In **Hailsham**, the **Crochet Club was** started by a volunteer during 2020 to share her skills and love for crochet and to help people learn so they had something relaxing to do. It started with 2 or 3 people and received a small sparks grant to get it going. Due to the pandemic, the club had to go online and continued to meet via a messenger room hosted by the community hub. The group has gone from strength to strength and recently achieved a larger Next Step Grant.

One participant said that the group was a lifeline for her to get some time for herself with other people who she could talk to. Another explained that it had been the first time she really felt that people valued her. She said it had helped her start to believe that she might be more capable than she thought.

Gardening, mental health, friendship and belonging

Community Development Workers have supported several **community gardening groups** across the county. Residents from **Marline Court** in **Hastings** have reflected that their garden has created an opportunity for neighbours to meet each other, which in turn has contributed to feelings of belonging. Others have reflected that being involved in creating and caring for the garden has helped them with their mental health.

Members of the **Battle Wildlife Meadows Group** in Rother reflected that the garden for them had given a sense of purpose and helped people to feel less isolated.

Singing, making connections, belonging and wellbeing

In **Newhaven**, Community Development Workers supported the creation of a **Community Choir** who came together and performed at a major Heritage event to celebrate the history of the lost village of Tide Mills. The Group gave feedback on the impact of their grant. They strongly agreed that their grant had helped them achieve something valuable in their community and had helped people connect in a meaningful way. "The joy that the choir participants took from performing to the public. There was a real sense of belonging with this choir. The response from the public was wonderful to see."

Community engagement, connections and the environment

In Polegate, a collaboration between the Town council, the AirS Community Development Workers and Sacred Earth, linked a community celebration with an event to engage local residents in plans for a community land project. There was lots of enthusiasm for what people would like to see happen on the land, and many signed up to be part of the 'Friends of' group to move the project forwards. Ideas included wellbeing in nature, activities in nature, conservation & land management, 'out of the box' ideas e.g. A Pagan rural retreat, family connection time and a Forest Garden & rewilding project.

The event inspired an unexpected outcome when the local Brownies group organised a trip to the site to explore it and to gather ideas about what they would like to see happening on the land that they could feed into the project.

Environment, woodwork, building relationships, making friends, social networks

In Peacehaven, a local resident with physical disabilities who also suffers with agoraphobia, approached the team to discuss his idea to create a bee corridor.

The team worked with him to connect with his neighbours and to access a small sparks grant to purchase wood and tools to make bee hotels. His neighbours supported him, and the bee hotels were fixed with help from the local Council.

He had struggled with loneliness and isolation due to his agoraphobia but has now built social connections with his neighbours. The project hasn't run smoothly – his health is not good, and he has had to move – but he has stayed in touch with his new friends and has even been out with them to join other community activities including a community litter pick.

Programme theories in action - Making it Happen in Peacehaven

This case study explores how Community Development Workers (CDWs) approached work in Peacehaven. It illustrates some of the community led initiatives that have developed, and the outcomes of those.

Building Relationships

An early step was a presentation by the team to the Town Council. The main objective was to inform Councillors about the Making it Happen project, and to initiate a relationship with them.

"What surprised me the most was the overwhelmingly positive response I received from the Councillors. There were questions around the motivations for the project, the areas selected, offers to show the team around Peacehaven and praise for the asset-based approach for the project."

Councillors took the Team on 'discovery walks' to share local knowledge, introduce them to local residents and to explore ideas for the area. The team held a pop-up event in the Big Park to meet people, and they delivered flyers to every household. Community Development Workers observations following these activities included;

- Strong distrust towards people in positions of power- residents feel they haven't been listened to.
- Lack of faith in opportunities for sustainable projects - burn out from previous initiatives which ended leaving residents to pick up the pieces.
- Frustration with some local services.
- Positive response to the team leaflet distribution– appreciation of the effort to get to know people better.

As with all the teams, lockdown seriously hampered work to build relationships with residents, so Community Development Workers did what they could using social media. They joined local neighbourhood groups and made connections. They asked people about their memories and places they love to go locally. A common thread was that despite challenges, people don't want to live anywhere else:

"We moved to Peacehaven 15 years ago. Shopping facilities are dreadful - the doctor's surgery heavily oversubscribed- occasionally troublesome youngsters about - the A259 road system is a nightmare - but I wouldn't move away. People talk to each other, and genuinely seem to care." (Facebook conversation)

The team made links with PCSOs, local Housing and Tenant Participation Officers, Neighbourhood First, Parks Officers and with organisations including Sustrans, Active Sussex and Kempton House Day Centre. They made connections with groups, including Meridian school PFTA and Peacehaven Football club and many more. There was a clear sense that people working and living in the area care and want to work together to make positive change.

There have been challenges. When a group bought a disused pub with plans to open a Community Centre and Mosque, there were protests from some in the community. The Team is working with the Mosque to build connections, relationships and understanding in the wider community, which is an ongoing process.

Making connections: Leading to community led activity

Community Development Workers have supported connections between many of the residents, groups and services that they've met, which in turn has led to a wealth of activity:

- Litter picking and bulb planting led by residents from Bricky and Cinque Foil with local services.
- A local resident who struggles with agoraphobia, who has initiated a project funded with a Small Spark grant to create a bee corridor with his neighbours.
- An intergenerational project funded through a Small Spark grant that encouraged children from the area to write to isolated older people during lockdown.
- An Easter egg hunt (which became a Nature Trail when COVID caused a delay) organised by local residents from the Helping Out CIC, and a Christmas lights celebration event funded through a Small Spark grant.
- A Small Spark funded children's writing project led by the Peace Community Centre and Mosque.
- An initiative to engage local Muslim families to enhance family life and to support deeper connections with the wider community, led by the Women's Group from the Mosque.

Community Development Workers worked with local residents to organise the Peacehaven Sparks event, which was themed around food. Aims were to: celebrate community; share learning; make connections; and make decisions on a community budget for community food related projects.

The event had to be managed with social distancing measures in place, but 47 people still came along. It was opened by Peacehaven's Deputy Mayor, followed by presentations from representatives of local groups about their activities. Five residents then presented their ideas for new projects. These included: a community herb garden, gardening container starter kits, cookery classes, raised planting beds and a community kitchen with aims to encourage people to sit and chat over homemade soup, presented by a member of the Mosque.

The event included a chance to network and vote on the proposals over food prepared by local residents, with entertainment from local musicians. The community kitchen proposal won the vote to receive a grant of £2,000. The Soup Kitchen will be led by the Mosque's youth group, but all five projects will continue to be supported by Making it Happen should they wish. However, the most powerful outcome is that all five community projects are keen to stay in touch and to support each other.

Outcomes

Residents involved in activities have provided powerful feedback about the impact for themselves, but there is also a growing sense of wider community benefit.

Residents from the Bricky and Cinque Foil are building connections with their neighbours, but also with residents from nearby Trafalgar and Collingwood Estates. A programme of events is planned for the year. Feedback from the Bricky & Cinque Foil Christmas Lights event indicated strong agreement with a range of statements including: "*the event helped us to achieve something valuable in our community"; it "helped people to connect in a meaningful way"; this "has snowballed to other community connections and resources".*

"The light switch on was attended by over 200 people. All local. It bought the whole neighbourhood out. Brought people together. Lovely time had by all – young and old" (Bricky and Cinque Foil Christmas Lights)

Programme theories in action - Making it Happen in Hollington

Building Relationships

The Community Development Workers (CDW) for Hollington have reflected that as an area, it is distinct from the Town Centre and can feel, especially for young people, isolated and overlooked. This case study explores the approach they have taken since the programme began.

The team began with a specific focus to work with young people to explore with them their experiences, views and priorities for their neighbourhood. With the onset of COVID and lockdown restrictions, this task became much more challenging and evolved into effort to build relationships with local residents generally.

Community Development Workers explored meeting people through social media, through Facebook and groups like 'Old School Hollington', and by creating an online coffee morning for people to connect with neighbours. This turned out to be a great way to 'find' people active in their community, but also to find out more about the history of the area. The coffee morning presented a challenge in that the group looked to the CDW to provide coordination and to 'drive' plans for the future. Maintaining the balance to ensure that this was a space for local residents to drive themselves was difficult.

Encouraging people to reflect on the past proved a great way to spark ideas for the future. The CDW encouraged people to look at their own skills and assets to take ideas forward but acknowledged that this takes time – "people are always more keen to suggest other people".

As restrictions began to relax, creative opportunities to meet people in a safe socially distanced way were trialled. The CDW spent a morning outside the community centre planting purple wellington boots with cyclamens and a Making it Happen postcard. While a handful of people commented that the boots would be stolen or vandalised, some did stop to chat which led to conversations, including positive acknowledgement of trying to cheer the area up. Photos posted on Facebook got almost 70 'likes' and numerous comments. The activity served the purpose of raising the profile of the Community Centre and Making it Happen, whilst also encouraging people to open up about the neighbourhood.

Despite the lockdown, the CDW was meeting people from the neighbourhood, getting word out about the programme and building some great relationships for the future.

"I would love to see more street party type celebrations for key events"

Making Connections

The CDW approached local councillors and made arrangements for zoom catch ups over coffee and Discovery Walks around the 'patch'. Through these connections the CDW was introduced to more 'connectors' in the community – people who are already active and involved in making positive change for Hollington. It was also a great way to find out more about the area's social history.

In collaboration with other local organisations, the Team delivered information and resources to residents during lockdown. In the run up to Christmas in 2020, packs with information about Hollington Community Centre, and mental health support provided through Mind were shared. These included information about Making it Happen, colouring pictures, pencils and a postcard encouraging people to share ideas about their favourite places – 'hidden treasures' – in the neighbourhood.

Connections with Xtrax, Optivo Housing Association, the Community Centre and Youth Centre all began to open more and more avenues. Collaboration with Active Hastings led to engagement with 20 families.

These connections have snowballed, leading to more connections, but also opportunities to link people, groups and organisations with each other.

Community Led Activity

The Team are now regularly approached for support to explore ideas, to develop a plan, and for connections to skills, resources and other assets to make these a reality. Examples include:

- An informal gardening group which the Team supported to access a Small Spark grant is showing powerful impact. Feedback shows that for the people who have been involved, the garden has fostered a sense of belonging and helped them with their mental health.

- Conversations around making a local green space safe for children to play which has revealed wonderful skills and assets amongst local residents.

- Greater connection and collaboration between the youth club and the Community Centre

- Work to support an informal group of neighbours who wanted to establish themselves as a resident's association – Chambers Crescent Residents Association – which holds aims around building community that reflect closely objectives of Making it Happen.

Outcomes: Chambers Crescent Residents Association

For Christmas 2021 the group organised a community Christmas tree exhibition on the central green. They had held a similar event in the past but wanted to make a bigger splash to bring people together from across Hollington. The group reflected that it was hard to get neighbours to engage with each other, but that the previous Christmas event had attracted people to attend from a wider area than expected. They were keen to make this an opportunity to get people to work together to make the event a huge success.

The group were successful in an application for a Small Spark grant.

The event provided a friendly welcome to people beyond the Crescent and sent out a message of neighbourliness. Already there are signs that relationships forged through being involved in organising and attending the event are holding firm. There is a sense that people are taking more pride in the area and are more receptive to ideas for working together. There are plans being developed to make improvements to the area and for events throughout the spring and summer.

Through this informal group, opportunities have emerged that are encouraging a sense of belonging and pride, which is also having a positive impact on making improvements to the general environment. The group is galvanising community spirit and a sense of neighbourliness that had previously felt lacking.

Programme Theory Testing and Refinement Analyses: A Summary that draws the data collected from all the methods together

Having examined the findings that emerged from the plurality of methods we put into action; the table below provides an overall summary of the key refinements that we would suggest are made to the 4 programme theories that were tested. The table is structured to illustrate the initial programme theory, and then articulates how, and in what way that programme theory (alongside the supporting explanatory assumptions and beliefs) have been refined. Through testing these theories, we now have a refined understanding of how and why MiH works in East Sussex in supporting community members to enact change and achieve their goals, and the various ways in which MiH supports communities in achieving this. These refinements are crucial for the next phase of the evaluation as we can further test these refined theories, potentially adding more clarity and depth of understanding as to how and why MiH works within East Sussex.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Programme Theory 1 – Building Foundations to Achieve Goals

How and why MiH works to improve self-efficacy, wellbeing, and social capital within neighbourhoods</th></tr>
<tr><th>Untested explanatory assumptions and beliefs</th><th>Tested explanatory assumptions and beliefs</th></tr>
<tr><td>1.1 –
In taking ABCD forward through MiH in East Sussex, the principles and values taken forward through the role of a community development worker lead to engaging people and communities in different ways and can assist and enable people to do/act on things they are passionate about which can lead to improving individual self-efficacy, wellbeing and social capital within those neighbourhoods where MiH is growing</td><td>1.1 (Refined) –
Taking ABCD forward through MiH in East Sussex, the CDW brings principles and values that lead to engaging people. The CDW assists and empowers people to do/act on things they are passionate about. Where community groups are developed, the shared sense of purpose between community members leads to improved self-efficacy, wellbeing and social capital in communities where MiH takes place</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.2 –
People who are connected with others in their community and share ideas and skills in relation to their interests are supported to explore how ideas and existing assets can turn into action led by themselves, which causes people to feel empowered as their cognition, behaviours, motivations and commitment to being involved strengthens and results in co-production as collective efficacy over community groups and activities is created/occurs</td><td>1.2 (Confirmed) –
People who are connected with others in their community and share ideas and skills in relation to their interests are supported to explore how ideas and existing assets can turn into action led by themselves, which causes people to feel empowered as their cognition, behaviours, motivations and commitment to being involved strengthens and results in co-production as collective efficacy over community groups and activities is created/occurs</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Programme theory 1 (Refined) – Building Foundations to Achieve Goals

MiH works in East Sussex through building the foundations to co-productively support community members to achieve their goals through improving and fostering self-efficacy, wellbeing and social capital within the community, as community members come together around a shared sense of purpose to work toward a shared goal that benefits themselves and the wider community</td></tr>
</table>

Programme Theory 2 – Making Connections How and why MiH works to generate changes in the diversity and typology of people's social networks, connections within their community, and awareness of what else exists within their community	
Untested Explanatory Assumptions and Beliefs	**Tested Explanatory Assumptions and Beliefs**
2.1 – For people who become involved in ABCD efforts and activities through MiH, being involved in community building discussions, efforts, and activities can lead to developing friendships, feeling valued, and part of their community which leads to improving wellbeing and can lead to effecting lifestyle changes which results in people becoming healthier	**2.1 (Confirmed) –** For people who become involved in ABCD efforts and activities through MiH, being involved in community building discussions, efforts, and activities can lead to developing friendships, feeling valued, and part of their community which leads to improving wellbeing and can lead to effecting lifestyle changes which results in people becoming healthier
2.2 – People involved in ABCD processes and activities within their community share with others and create resources for the wider community which builds their social network and social capital within the community. This makes people feel like they have a strong, positive relationship with their community which improves an individual's wellbeing as they feel they are helping and valued by others	**2.2 (Confirmed) –** People involved in ABCD processes and activities within their community share with others and create resources for the wider community which builds their social network and social capital within the community. This makes people feel like they have a strong, positive relationship with their community which improves an individual's wellbeing as they feel they are helping and valued by others
2.3 – Taking ABCD forward through MiH in more deprived areas, ABCD efforts and activities can lead to sharing skills, knowledge, and expertise which are shared with people and build their individual capacity and leads to support people to start-up businesses and build skill deficits which are more likely to exist within more deprived communities	**2.3 (Refined) –** Taking ABCD forward through MiH in more deprived areas, ABCD efforts and activities can lead to sharing skills, knowledge, and expertise which are shared with people and build their individual capacity *and leads to support people to start-up businesses* and build skill deficits which are more likely to exist within more deprived communities
2.4 – People involved in ABCD processes and activities within their community share gifts and assets which fosters interactions between people and results in mutual learning occurring which they benefit from using in their day-to-day life	**2.4 (Confirmed) –** People involved in ABCD processes and activities within their community share gifts and assets which fosters interactions between people and results in mutual learning occurring which they benefit from using in their day-to-day life
2.5 – MiH working in local places and connecting with a range of people leads to identifying skills, ideas, opportunities, and bringing people together around shared interests/passions through the community development worker. This results in people building friendships, relationships, and becoming more connected enhancing the individual capacities of people, diversity of their social networks to support, and provide more resources for people within that community	**2.5 (Confirmed) –** MiH working in local places and connecting with a range of people leads to identifying skills, ideas, opportunities, and bringing people together around shared interests/passions through the community development worker. This results in people building friendships, relationships, and becoming more connected enhancing the individual capacities of people, diversity of their social networks to support, and provide more resources for people within that community

Programme Theory 2 – Making Connections Continued…

How and why MiH works to generate changes in the diversity and typology of people's social networks, connections within their community, and awareness of what else exists within their community

Untested Explanatory Assumptions and Beliefs	Tested Explanatory Assumptions and Beliefs
2.6 – People involved in ABCD processes and activities become more aware of and share assets which increases their connections and individual capability as they learn new skills which develops their self-esteem, confidence and strengthens their bond with community	**2.6 (Confirmed) –** People involved in ABCD processes and activities become more aware of and share assets which increases their connections and individual capability as they learn new skills which develops their self-esteem, confidence and strengthens their bond with community
2.7 – For people who live in places where MiH is the more opportunities they have to participate in thing they are interested in/passionate about and supported to be involved in the ways that they can generates changes in the diversity and typology of their social networks, connections within their community, and awareness of what else exists within their community	**2.7 (Refined) –** For people who live in places where MiH is there are more *opportunities for community members* to participate in things that they are interested in/passionate about and *are supported to be involved in by other community members and MiH. Attending these opportunities* generates change in the diversity and typology of social networks and connections with the *community as community members connect and support one-another, raising awareness* of what else exists within their community

Programme Theory 2 (Refined) – Making Connections

MiH works *in East Sussex through providing a greater* awareness of what else exists in the community, *being a valued source of information in connecting community members together around shared ideas. As people become more aware of what exists in the community, MiH supports community members in* generating change in the diversity and typology of people's social networks *through fostering* connections within the community *and providing opportunities to positively influence community decisions, and identify and engage with resources community resources*

Programme Theory 3 – Communities Taking the Lead How and why MiH builds capacity within communities to take forward community actions which helps build community resilience, and neighbourhood-based systems for change	
Untested explanatory assumptions and beliefs	**Tested explanatory assumptions and beliefs**
3.1 – ABCD is taken forward through MiH within communities in line with an agreed principle of partnership working in terms of developing a collaborative asset-based approach to meeting the ambitions of communities across East Sussex. The approach of ABCD in engaging people in conversations about their community, their interests/passions, and what they would be willing to give to support community efforts. With the support of the Community Development Worker this can lead to the generation of ideas, opportunities, and solutions to issues and sharing resources with other people/organisations which may lead to building capacity within the community to take forward community action	**3.1 (Refined) -** ABCD is taken forward through MiH within communities in line with an agreed principle of partnership working to develop a collaborative asset-based approach to meeting the ambitions of communities across East Sussex. *The approach of ABCD in engaging people* in conversation about their community, their interests, passions, and what they would be willing to gift to support community efforts, with the support of, *and rapport developed with, the Community Development Worker*. These actions lead to the generation of ideas, opportunities, and solutions to community-relevant issues and sharing resources with other people and organisations. In turn, the capacity built within the community to take forward community actions *help to build community resilience through groups/activities which occur through community organisation, generating a holistic understanding of what communities can do together to improve health and wellbeing and result in community-based systems for change*
3.2 – People involved in ABCD processes within their community connect with other residents and associations through the support of the community development worker about their interests which supports communities to access untapped skills, talents and resources and work together through exchanging assets leading to creating and setting up new groups and activities within the community	**3.2 (Confirmed) –** People involved in ABCD processes within their community connect with other residents and associations through the support of the CDW around their interests. CDWs then support communities to access untapped skills, talents and resources. In working together through exchanging assets, new groups and activities are created within the community around shared ideas and interests
3.3 – Within communities there are a range of community sector providers, organisations and associations involved in activities and efforts which cut-across strategic policy agendas. If the system is better able to connect with, and understand, this diverse picture then it can lead to a greater awareness, and appreciation of, community role and value which can lead to enhancing how people and communities are engaged with system partners/organisations	**3.3 (Refined) –** **Refined 3.3:** Communities house a range of community sector providers, organisations, and associations involved in activities and efforts which cut-across strategic policy agendas. *MiH supports the understanding, and connection with, this diverse structure through its Community Development Workers and the resources they introduce, leading to* a great awareness, and appreciation, of community role and value *between both organisation and individual*. This appreciation enhances the way in which people and communities are engaged by, and engage with, organisations and system partners, *developing previously unidentified and beneficial connections to resources*

Programme Theory 3 – Communities Taking the Lead Continued… **How and why MiH builds capacity within communities to take forward community actions which helps build community resilience, and neighbourhood-based systems for change**	
Untested explanatory assumptions and beliefs	**Tested explanatory assumptions and beliefs**
No untested assumption of belief	**1.4 (New) –** *The creation of new groups and activities within the local community developed by those connected with MiH provides opportunities for community members to connect and communicate around a shared interest. These groups provide the local community an informal setting within which they feel assured and comfortable through forming social bonds with other group members. These social bonds help foster community resilience through the development of friendship groups, which support community resilience beyond the immediate community group*
Programme Theory 3 (Refined) – Communities Taking the Lead MiH builds capacity within communities *in East Sussex through developing positive connections between community members and the CDW and supporting the identification of unmet needs and issues affecting the local community. With the support of the CDW, community members* take forward community actions*, developing bonds of friendship and trust. These bonds* help build community resilience *as community members come together to develop community-* and neighbourhood-based systems for change*, leading to small yet significant changes within their community*	

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Programme Theory 4 – Impacting on Health and Wellbeing

How and why MiH works to develop solutions which go on to improve individual mental health and wellbeing for people within their communities which creates healthier places where they live</th></tr>
<tr><th>Untested explanatory assumptions and beliefs</th><th>Tested explanatory assumptions and beliefs</th></tr>
<tr><td>4.1 –
An appreciation for ABCD, and desire to work differently with, and within communities leads to thinking about how we enable communities to identify and utilise strengths which exist, though remain hidden, and how this can lead to people and communities developing and realising these solutions which go on to improve mental health and wellbeing of people within communities where ABCD is, and healthier places for people where they live. This can lead to more sustainable health outcomes for people and communities, and neighbourhoods feeling/being empowered through being able to make a difference to what is important</td><td rowspan="2">4.1 (Refined with 3.2) –
For people living in communities where MiH is, there are issues where they live that they feel unable to effect on their own. Taking ABCD forward through MiH can help identify and utilise existing, yet hidden, resources, helping to connect people in realising and developing solutions. These solutions build individual capacity, empowering communities to make change happen. Consequently, communities can take on and tackle more issues within their community, improving individual and community mental health and wellbeing</td></tr>
<tr><td>4.2 –
For people living within communities there are things that they care about or are issues for them where they live but feel unable to effect/improve it on their own. Taking ABCD forward through MiH can help to connect people less likely to have the skills, knowledge and support to make it happen in their lives with people who can support, which builds individual capacity connecting people to others who can help so people are more able to make change happen. If these skills are shared more widely within the community, and how to do it within the community, then they can tackle more issues within their community. In doing so this can reduce dependency on smaller, concentrated numbers of people/services within communities</td></tr>
<tr><td>4.3 –
For MiH to generate wider community participation in the longer term, there is a need to respond to the immediate needs of people within communities. This can help build trust, support and people having the space to think about and identify assets within communities which lead to alleviating immediate stresses and worries amongst people within communities, and a platform is created for co-designing projects and activities that embody, and are owned by, the community</td><td>4.3 (Refuted) –
For MiH to generate wider community participation in the longer term, there is a need to respond to the immediate needs of people within communities. This can help build trust, support and people having the space to think about and identify assets within communities which lead to alleviating immediate stresses and worries amongst people within communities, and a platform is created for co-designing projects and activities that embody, and are owned by, the community</td></tr>
</table>

Programme Theory 4 – Impacting on Health and Wellbeing Continued… How and why MiH works to develop solutions which go on to improve individual mental health and wellbeing for people within their communities which creates healthier places where they live	
Untested explanatory assumptions and beliefs	**Tested explanatory assumptions and beliefs**
4.4 – People involved in ABCD processes within their community are supported to connect with other residents and organisations and (re)act on things they want to take forward; this leads to people coming together and being more involved in creating positive change which build trust and confidence between stakeholders as they take actions forward which results in building more resilience and integrated communities as community capacity and capability strengthens	**4.4 (Confirmed) –** People involved in ABCD processes within their community are supported to connect with other residents and organisations and (re)act on things they want to take forward; this leads to people coming together and being more involved in creating positive change which build trust and confidence between stakeholders as they take actions forward which results in building more resilience and integrated communities as community capacity and capability strengthens
4.5 – If MiH works with people and communities in identified areas of East Sussex, where there may be less access to certain resources and more likely to experience certain inequalities ABCD can lead to identifying and sharing hidden/existing assets and bringing people together with shared interests and passions within communities. This brings people together and leads to forming relationships, and a can-do attitude within their community which can enable self-help, different stakeholders being able to work together, and alter-reduce-delay demand for service provisions, creating a good culture within communities where MiH is	**4.5 (Confirmed) –** If MiH works with people and communities in identified areas of East Sussex, where there may be less access to certain resources and more likely to experience certain inequalities ABCD can lead to identifying and sharing hidden/existing assets and bringing people together with shared interests and passions within communities. This brings people together and leads to forming relationships, and a can-do attitude within their community which can enable self-help, different stakeholders being able to work together, and alter-reduce-delay demand for service provisions, creating a good culture within communities where MiH is
4.6 – People involved in ABCD processes within their community are supported to be involved in conversations with other residents and organisations resulting in people sharing ideas and opportunities through relationships which leads to problem solving and solutions being generated for the community as people have assets, networks, and connections to support	**4.6 (Confirmed) –** People involved in ABCD processes within their community are supported to be involved in conversations with other residents and organisations resulting in people sharing ideas and opportunities through relationships which leads to problem solving and solutions being generated for the community as people have assets, networks, and connections to support
Programme Theory 4 (Refined) – Impacting on Health and Wellbeing MiH works *in East Sussex through supporting community members as they come together to* develop solutions *to individual- and community-related health and wellbeing issues, empowering community members with a 'can-do' attitude as they enact and support self-helping behaviours. In supporting one-another, there is less demand for service provisions as community capacity and capability is strengthened, leading to* improved individual *and community* mental health and wellbeing, which creates healthier places where they live	

Where We Are Heading to: Key learning, reflections, implications, recommendations and next steps

Key learning, reflections and implications from Phase 1 and Phase 2

1. The Making it Happen programme has utilised a partnership working approach with five core community-based organisations and wider strategic stakeholders to develop and embed a working model within communities that embraces Asset Based Community Development principles.

2. The evaluation found that Community Development Workers, and the five community based organisations: Sussex Community Development Association, Action in Rural Sussex, Rother Voluntary Action, Hastings Voluntary Action and 3VA, were acknowledged, appreciated and seen as central to the success of ABCD activities, groups, projects and events by community members.

3. The key learning from the evaluation so far has come from the development, testing and refinement of the first four key programme theories. Since the development of eight key theories in 2021, the emerging data, generated from ELG discussions, meetings, focus groups, interviews, case studies and surveys has enabled us to learn that there are four initial strong programme theories (1-4) (and that theories 5-8 are to be tested in the next steps of the evaluation)[9]. These are:

Programme Theory 1 – Building Foundations to Achieve Goals: Making it Happen works to improve self-efficacy, wellbeing and social capital within neighbourhoods.
Programme Theory 2 – Making Connections: Making it Happen works to generate changes in the diversity and typology of people's social networks, connections within their communities and awareness of what else exists within their communities.
Programme Theory 3 – Communities Taking the Lead: Making it Happen builds capacities within communities to take forward community action, which helps build community resilience and neighbourhood-based systems for change.
Programme Theory 4 – Impacting on Health and Wellbeing: Making it Happen works to develop solutions which go on to improve individual mental health and wellbeing for people within their communities which creates healthier places where they live.

4. Our key reflections are:

    a. The programme theories that were collaboratively developed through phase 1 have remained strong in phase 2 which underscores their credibility.
    b. The theories evidence that Making it Happen is a salient addition to ABCD within communities, with these four positive programme theories representing outcomes that are aligned well to the original programme assumption that there is promise, through Making it Happen to enhance the ability of individuals and communities to create or sustain health and wellbeing.
    c. There are some aspects of theories 1 to 4 and all of theories 5 to 8 that need testing and refinement. In the case of theories 1 to 4, this includes the refuted programme theories which can be revisited when further data has been collected. These programme theories should not be rejected because further data and time to mature may yield a more informed conclusion.

[9] Important note: Once core group feedback has been provided, we can update the learning, implications, recommendations and next step sections to incorporate this feedback.

d. The key reflection from the analyses so far is that Making it Happen remains an innovative model that contributes towards ABCD in communities where it is based.
e. Further exploration of theories 1-4 may prove beneficial for a greater understanding of what works *for whom* as the emerging findings are currently limited in this regard.

5. To date, the Making it Happen programme has been evaluated *across* the five core partner organisations. One of the implications for the programme at this stage is to consider whether it is appropriate timing to explore now the contexts of the Making it Happen programme within *each* of the areas covered by the partner organisations and how individual partner Community Development Workers may engage within their communities. This could be explored through the use of photovoice and survey methods; and could run alongside the grants review evaluation work, so that empirical data feeds into this exploration of individual areas and the programme theories. Partners will be asked to consider this suggestion when they provide feedback and may decide to wait until programme theories 5-8 have been tested and refined before deciding.

6. The evaluation team recommended using the core group platform to discuss the findings and how the partners can identify opportunities to inform practice, decision making and learning that they take from the evaluation so far. One of the key implications from the evaluation is that Community Development Workers who are central to the programme theory outcomes are ideally placed to contribute to these conversations in the ODT forum. Ensuring that we work with the core group to develop different communication styles to convey the findings and discuss them with different audiences such as the CDW cohort, is going to be key to the process of dissemination, learning and informing practice.

Recommendations

It is important to note that the recommendations are based on the evaluation being in the middle of Phase 2, as outlined in the timeline on the wider Making it Happen calendar plan. With this context in mind and building upon the learning, reflections and implications to date, our recommendations to take forward the Making it Happen programme and the evaluation are:

1. To continue to identify opportunities for the Making it Happen partners and the evaluation team to involve communities further in decision making about evidencing their ABCD activities. This can be taken forward through some of the methods we intend to use in the next phase of the evaluation e.g., using Photovoice which requires community participation.

2. To invite the Making it Happen partner organisations to understand the programme and the evaluation, to create a 'pull' towards the evidence. The aims of this recommendation are to establish a proactive interest from stakeholders in the programme and the emerging evidence; and to create opportunities to discuss the use of the findings to inform practice, make decisions and learn within the partnering organisations, and within wider parts of the system or stakeholders that the findings are relevant to. This relates to the principle that the evaluation has an ambition to support learning and improving, rather than proving and therefore together it will be possible to create an ongoing dialogue as a driver for improvement and adaptation.

Next Steps[10]

The next steps that have been identified and discussed, specifically in relation to the programme evaluation are:

1. To proceed with testing of the refined/new Programme Theories 1-4, where there is access to data and the core group has an interest in exploring specific theories.

2. To commence the testing of programme theories 5-8 and to mobilise the connections to the relevant stakeholders through the core group meetings.

3. To close this circle, these findings should be taken back to the stakeholders involved in phase 1. As there are many assumptions to potentially test further, there is possibly a question of prioritising these theories again as to gather a greater understanding. In previous conversations, the evaluators described this process as "knowing more and more about less and less".

4. To consider the benefit of exploring the contexts of Making it Happen programme within *each* of the areas covered by the partner organisations and how individual partner Community Development Workers may engage within their communities.

5. To agree the timeline and the options from the presented methods with the core team for the remainder of Phase 2 of the evaluation, as laid out in the wider Making it Happen Calendar Plan:

    i. Further iterations of the community member surveys: data collection will remain open throughout 2022 and the descriptive analyses of the data will continue to be shared with Making it Happen.
    ii. Potential introduction of Photovoice and the associated storytelling that arises from this: planned for May 2022.
    iii. Q-Methodology: Dates to be agreed within 2022, though the evaluation team will be led by the core group on wider timings.
    iv. Learning programme evaluation surveys and focus group: The analyses of survey responses is ongoing and up to date. The write up of the learning programme is practical at the end of the first year of the learning programme delivery.
    v. Evaluation of the three levels of grants: data collection has commenced for the small sparks grants and is being coordinated through the programme manager. The evaluation team will work with Angie Greany in May 2022, to agree on dates for analyses once data collection is complete.
    vi. To work with the programme manager to develop an executive summary of this report and to create a final draft of a bitesize report before the end of May 2022.

[10] The 'Next Steps' information is specific to the Making it Happen core team and commissioning platform. We recommend removing or editing this version in accordance with core group preference in the Evaluation Report Summary version.

6. To identify through the core group if/where there are opportunities for capacity building workshops about the evaluation methods.
7. To work with Making it Happen to consider whether to start to disseminate the evaluation findings so far. The core group focus may be on dissemination to practitioners, partners, strategic stakeholders and within networks and to academic audiences. The evaluation team will be led by the core group on their ambitions for this and productive plans are taking shape with the Making it Happen programme manager (network and conference co-production).

Appendices of Collaboratively Co-produced Outputs

Appendix 1: Community Member Survey (Iteration 1: The Longer Survey Version)
[Online Link]

Appendix 2: Community Member Survey (Iteration 1: The Shorter Survey Version)

[Online Link]

Appendix 3: Community Development Worker Learning Programme – Example of a Session Outcomes Survey

[Online Link]

Appendix 4: Information Sheet and Consent Form

[Online Link]

Appendix 5: Making it Happen Small Sparks Grant Application Form

[Online Link]

[AG please can you include the latest version of the application form here? Thank you.]

Appendix 6: Making it Happen Small Sparks Grant Review Format

[Online Link]

[AG please can you include the latest version of the review format we worked on here? Thank you.]

Appendix 7: ELG: How and Why Conversation Template

[Online Link]

Appendix 8: ELG: Asset Mapping Template for Realist Evaluation Purposes

This template was designed in collaboration with Community Development Workers. The ELG groups did not continue, so this was not a template that was able to be used in practice for each team member, within each asset area, over each year of the evaluation. [AG: you may want to remove this appendix if it is not relevant for the report. We included it because it was a good example of how the ELG sessions would have been able to gather evidence about what Community Development Workers were doing and how it related to a realist evaluation.]

[Online Link]

Appendix 9: Making it Happen Literature Synthesis

[Online Link]

Appendix 10: Making it Happen Plain Speaking Programme Theory Presentation
[Online Link]

Appendix 11: How and Why Training Slides

[Online Link]

Appendix 12: Community Development Worker Learning Programme - Initial Session Outcomes

The CDW Learning programme session outcomes are outlined below from the two sessions that were completed in 2021 and 2022. The sessions were well attended by Community Development Workers who were adapting to the ever-changing social restrictions that were implemented by the government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The two learning programme sessions that have been evaluated so far are:

- **Session 1:** A deep understanding of ABCD: ABDC principles, what is and what is not ABCD, connection with Making it Happen and engagement approaches to working in the community. Seventeen Community Development Workers responded to this session evaluation.

- **Session 2:** Creative ways to engage - Getting started in an ABCD way: The practical application of principles and tools that may be useful in outreach work, initial engagement with new and existing groups and building and maintaining working relationships with individuals and groups within the communities. Eleven Community Development Workers responded to this session evaluation.

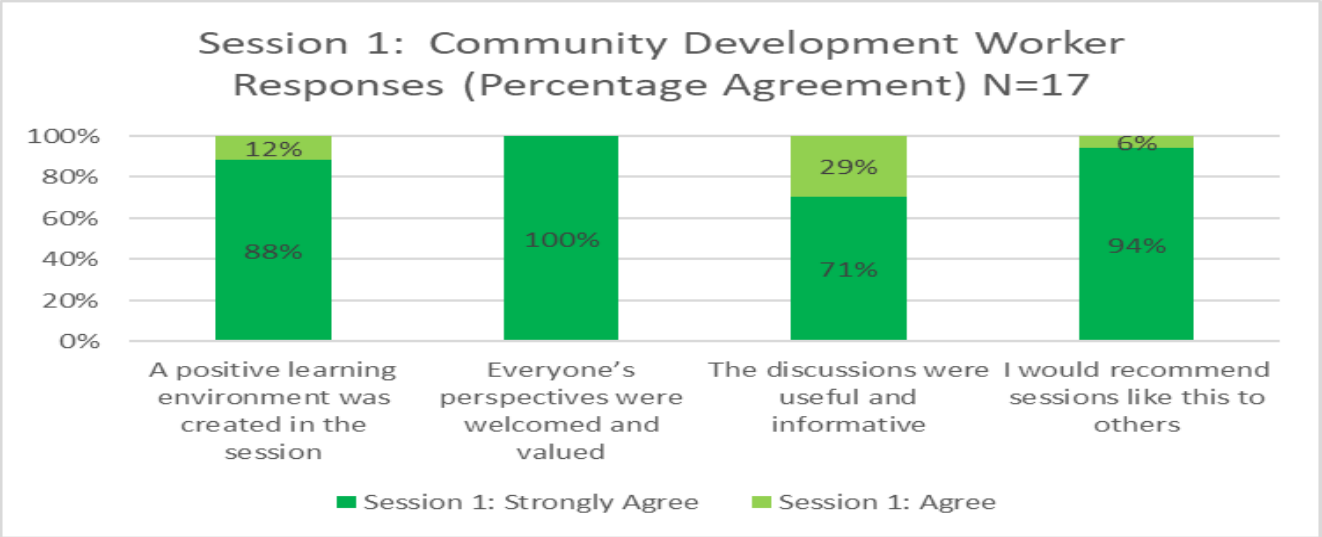
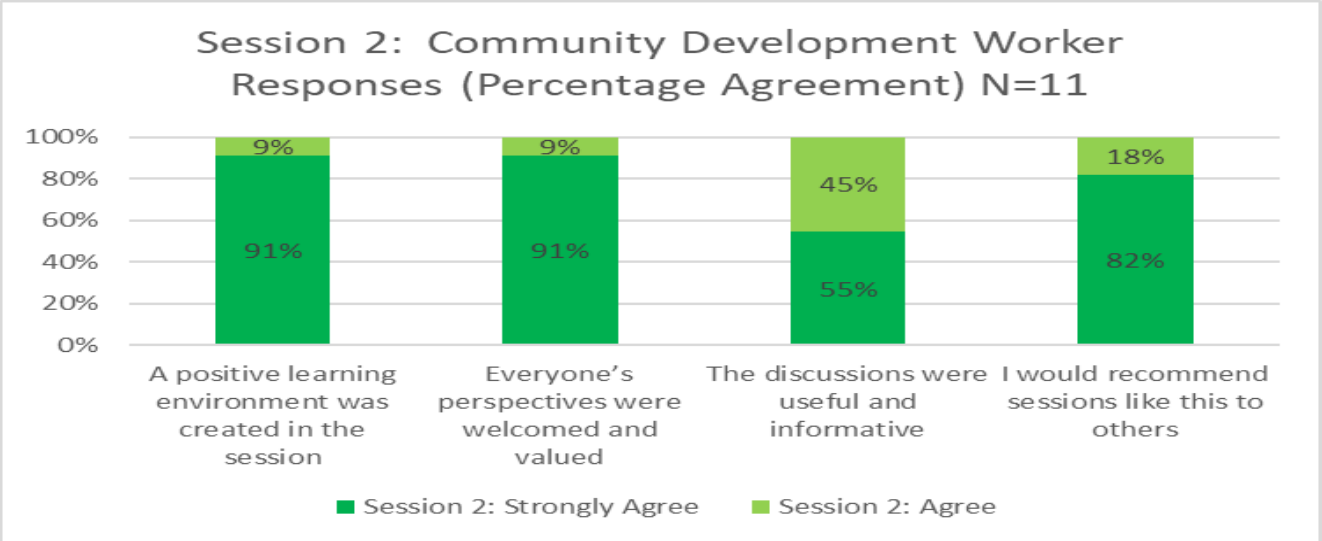
The two bar charts that follow demonstrate the percentage of agreement between the Community Development Workers across four outcomes areas. The key outcomes are:

- All of the Community Development Workers agreed that the sessions were positively received, across all of the four outcome areas.

- The strongest level of agreement among Community Development Workers occurred in relation to the perception that everyone's perspectives were welcomed and valued (session 1: 100%; session 2: 91%) and that there was a positive learning environment in each session (session 1: 88%; session 2: 92%).

- There was also strong agreement that the Community Development Workers would recommend the sessions to others (session 1: 94%; session 2: 82%). The Making it Happen team felt strongly that this finding reflected the direct inclusion of them as Community Development Workers in the co-development of the learning programme session content and in leading with the co-production and co-delivery of the sessions.

- There was complete consensus, though less strength in the magnitude of agreement, that the session discussions were useful and informative (session 1: 71% strongly agreed; session 2: 55% strongly agreed). This reflected the variation in discussion topics and the fact that some areas are more or less aligned to different people's professional interests. Importantly, as evidenced above, strong agreement was found that the sessions were recommended to others.

When asked about the relevance of the sessions to inform ABCD practice, the Community Development Workers' responses could be organised into four key themed areas. The majority of responses were aligned to a reflection and awareness that the CDW learned new knowledge that they could take forward into the communities where they worked (44%). A third of the responses related to CDWs confirming that what they were doing already could be strengthened as existing effective practice (30%). There was also an emphasis of greater awareness about the language that surrounds ABCD would be attended by CDWs in practice (19%). The remaining CDWs said that their acknowledgement of perspectives and the benefits of MiH would inform their practice (7%).

Informing ABCD Practice Themes	**Frequency of Responses**	**Percentage of Responses (%)**
Acknowledgement of perspectives and benefits of MiH	2	7.4
Awareness about the language we use in ABCD approaches	5	18.5
Confirmation of effective ABCD practice	8	29.6
Reflection and awareness to take new knowledge forward into the community	12	44.4
Total	27	100