think local
act personal

ARE WE THERE YET?

A planning tool and checklist for building community connections

June 2011

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Foreword

Personal support networks are so important for our quality of life and wellbeing. Knowing someone you can ask for advice or practical help, being involved in a group or community association and feeling that you can make your views heard and influence local decisions are all indicators of health and happiness.

Think Local Act Personal is clear in its commitment to building community capacity and stresses the importance of community connection as part of the prevention agenda. But what, in practice, does that mean for those of us running or commissioning services on the ground? What would it look like if people and organisations were all working together to develop and make the most effective use of people's 'social capital'? How would we ensure that our efforts benefited those older and disabled people who are often the most isolated and marginalised? And how would we know if we were doing a good job?

This helpful and practical planning tool, developed by the Building Community Capacity project, sets out a vision of what the 'gold standard' in building community connection and networks might look like. It includes a checklist to help you work out the questions to ask yourselves and others and shows how to make the important links between social capital, Think Local Act Personal and the health and wellbeing agenda as a whole.

It is designed to be used alongside 'Does it Work?' – a guide to evaluating the impact of services and projects on social capital, also developed by the Building Community Capacity project. It aims to help statutory agencies and providers, together with community organisations and local people, ensure sure that in tough times, the real wealth of local communities is released and sustained.

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1 Purpose of the planning tool

The Building Community Capacity project now led by the Think Local, Act Personal partnership has been working with councils and their community partners across the country, uncovering a treasure trove of good practice and examples of a wide range of approaches to building, releasing and sustaining social capital. The project has also found evidence that a focus on increasing individual and social capital can improve wellbeing and quality of life and have a clear and positive economic impact (See Knapp et al on the BCC website).

But how, in practice, can councils, their partners and local communities help to mobilise and extend their capacities to support disabled and older people and enable them to contribute as full citizens at a time of severe budget pressures?

The planning tool has been developed for use by local people, community and statutory organisations and providers who want to make best use of, and further develop social capital in their areas. It is of particular use to health and social care but is applicable across the public sector. It helps you to:

- **Describe what is currently in place**

- **Identify priorities for the development of local social capital**

- **Link these local objectives to national priorities**

- **Plan further developments.**

The checklist can be used alongside Does it work? A guide to evaluating capacity-building projects, also developed by the Building Community Capacity project, to gain a rich understanding of how services, projects, community groups and local people are contributing to community capacity, where there is potential to do more, and how organisations can begin to measure the cost-effectiveness of what they are dong.

2 | Scope

For the purposes of this tool, social capital includes:

- **Social networks** – of friends, neighbours, workmates and others

- **Membership of groups** – that are run by and for local people

- **What it's like to live somewhere** – the quality of the interactions that people have with others when they are out and about in the local area

- **Being able to contribute –** being able to make a contribution, help others, give your time and skills, be valued for their contribution.

The focus of the tool is on the outcomes to be achieved in terms of access to and use of social capital. It is helpful for:

- **Local people and community organisations** – to examine what local people and organisations do to help make best use of, and further develop social capital; and how they can be involved in reshaping local services to do so.

- **Commissioners** – making the development and use of social capital integral to all strategic commissioning plans and the way the service provider market is reshaped; and involve people with support needs in the planning of these developments.

- **Service providers** – enabling people with support needs to develop and make more effective use of social capital and have the opportunity to contribute to their local community.

3 Why focus on social capital?

3. Social capital plays an essential role in enhancing the quality of life of older and disabled people. It can potentially improve their:

- **Ability to contribute – providing opportunities to help others and contribute to wider community life**

- **Access to the support that people require to live their lives**

- **Ability to influence the way services are developed and delivered** [1]

Being connected with others, getting out and about, being part of community life and being able to contribute are important things in their own right but they also help to promote individuals' health and wellbeing and can reduce people's need to use or level of dependency on health and social care services. Tracking the links between social capital, improved health and wellbeing and priorities set by Think Local Act Personal should therefore be an integral part of local commissioning.

Table 3 shows how this can be done (see appendix)

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[1] Further information on social capital and how it can be developed and used can be found in 'Social capital, co-production and the delivery of Putting People First: scoping a framework for social capital', report for DH, OPM 2009

4 ┊ The vision

The vision of local social capital and how it can enhance the lives of older and disabled people underpins the checklist and comprises two parts: people and organisations.

People ┊ The story

It is really clear what the community has to offer people and what people have to offer their community and we see people leading ordinary, fulfilled lives in their own homes, work, leisure and personal relationships.

Older and disabled people are connecting with and involved in building their local communities. They are central to and valued and respected by all parts of their communities because they are seen as community leaders and participants.

Public services, businesses and community organisations and groups know the value of disabled and older people because of the positive impact their leadership has made on all parts of the community.

Community initiatives are led by older and disabled people and the wider community knows and trusts that the initiatives will make a positive difference to the community.

Organisations ┊ The story

Organisations that commission and provide services for older and disabled people and also the wider community know that when people are connected, contributing to and leading their communities, there are better outcomes all around. People feel safer, happier and more in control of their lives and public money goes further.

Organisations know that most of what is needed to build capacity and strengthen communities is already out there and that their role is to connect, harness and nurture the current strengths and capacity in communities.

Therefore, ensuring that everything they do supports people to be part of communities and does nothing to undermine social capital is the core aim of all organisations.

Organisations that commission and provide specialist services have new relationships with universal public services, the third sector, community groups and businesses in a new collaborative approach to meeting community need.

5 The checklist

Both of the elements of the vision are broken down into a series of sub-headings that together set the 'gold standard' (see Tables 1 and 2). The tool provides:

- Descriptive statements – that present the 'gold standard' putting flesh on the bones of the two-part vision. Most of the statements relating to older and disabled people and to commissioners and service providers represent the views that they would be expected to hold when the gold standard has been achieved.

If you were successful, people would be saying…

If you were successful you could say the following about your organisation/local area

- Achievements – against each of the descriptive statements describe what has already been achieved.

- Information about what worked, for each of the achievements, describing which aspects of what was done contributed most to the achievement.

- Future priorities are given for each of the descriptive statements – these identify one issue that should now be tackled to improve things further.

Table 1 : If you were successful, older and disabled people and other local people and families would be saying…

Contributing to, and using social capital	Achievements (What has been achieved?)	What worked? (What was done to achieve it?)	Future priorities (What should now be tackled to further improve things?)
Social networks I have a close network of friends and am on good terms with my neighbours My friends, neighbours and local people look out for me and support me I do things to help or support friends, neighbours and other local people			

Contributing to, and using social capital	Achievements (What has been achieved?)	What worked? (What was done to achieve it?)	Future priorities (What should now be tackled to further improve things?)
Membership of groups I know about all the local community associations and groups that I can join, how they can help me and how I can contribute All community associations around here go out of their way to include everyone I feel welcomed and included in all of the activities of the groups that I have joined I am able to contribute to community associations and feel that my contribution is valued.			

Contributing to, and using social capital	Achievements (What has been achieved?)	What worked? (What was done to achieve it?)	Future priorities (What should now be tackled to further improve things?)
What it's like to live here I feel safe and welcome on the streets around here and have a number of friendly acquaintances If an individual was in trouble, or had not been seen around much, people would notice and do something about it I find it easy to get out and about when I want to I know about the range of jobs, education and training opportunities around here and am able to get involved when I want to			

Contributing to, and using social capital	Achievements (What has been achieved?)	What worked? (What was done to achieve it?)	Future priorities (What should now be tackled to further improve things?)
Being able to contribute I know how to make my views heard and influence decisions about local services and the local community I feel that people listen and take notice of my views and that my contribution is valued I am treated as an equal partner by people who run the services I use I am able to use my own time, skills, networks and connections whenever I need help or support and I don't feel that my effort is wasted			

Table 2 : If you were successful, you could say the following about your organisation…

Enabling the development and use of social capital	**Achievements** (What has been achieved?)	**What worked?** (What was done to achieve it?)	**Future priorities** (What should now be tackled to further improve things?)
COMMISSIONERS, PROVIDERS AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS			
Social networks We have a clear view of the extent of people's social networks and how effective they are We know how much time people spend on, and what they do, to support others We know what people value about supporting others and the impact is has on their lives We know to what degree and how people would prefer to be involved in supporting others			

Enabling the development and use of social capital	Achievements (What has been achieved?)	What worked? (What was done to achieve it?)	Future priorities (What should now be tackled to further improve things?)
COMMISSIONERS, PROVIDERS AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS			
Membership of groups We have a clear picture of all the community associations in the area and the opportunities that are available for local people to join groups People are welcomed and included in all of the activities of their chosen community associations People are enabled to contribute in a range of different ways to community associations and are valued for doing so			

Enabling the development and use of social capital	Achievements (What has been achieved?)	What worked? (What was done to achieve it?)	Future priorities (What should now be tackled to further improve things?)
COMMISSIONERS, PROVIDERS AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS			
What it's like to live here We understand how all older and disabled people get out and about in their local communities and the quality of their interactions with local people. Disabled and older people are able to access local services/amenities and find it easy to get out and about in their communities			

Enabling the development and use of social capital	Achievements (What has been achieved?)	What worked? (What was done to achieve it?)	Future priorities (What should now be tackled to further improve things?)
COMMISSIONERS, PROVIDERS AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS			
Being able to contribute We know what skills and talents people have to contribute and we enable everyone to participate in a way that works for them We treat people as equal partners or 'co-producers' in our service/organisation			

Enabling the development and use of social capital	Achievements (What has been achieved?)	What worked? (What was done to achieve it?)	Future priorities (What should now be tackled to further improve things?)
COMMISSIONERS			
We take a strategic view of social capital and how it can be further developed as part of the lives of older and disabled people and it is central to all local public service strategic plans			
Developing and making best use of social capital is given a high priority and is explicitly taken into account in service specifications and the market development and management activities of commissioners			
Older and disabled and other local people are actively involved in deciding social capital development priorities, what they will do to deliver them and the support they may need to do so			

SERVICE PROVIDERS (OF UNIVERSAL AND TARGETED SERVICES) AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS			
Our service/organisation and the way we coordinate things ensures that people can make the most efficient use of their social capital			
Our service/organisation supports people to maintain, develop and make best use of their social networks and friendships			
Our service/organisation fully includes older and disabled people and we support them to participate in and contribute to activities			
Our service/organisation actively works with all local people to increase the ability of older and disabled people to get out and about and experience positive interactions			

COMMISSIONERS, PROVIDERS AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS			
Performance management We performance manage our contribution to enabling the development and use of social capital by older and disabled people.			
Workforce development All our staff have the skills and knowledge required to enable the development of social capital and its use by older and disabled people.			
Training in enabling and developing the use of social capital is provided to all service providers, staff and local people.			
Job descriptions and service configurations and integrated service pathways are adapted to ensure an effective focus on development and use of social capital			

6 How to use the checklist

The tool can be used in many ways, some of the reasons for using it ("Why") and ways in which it might be used ("How") are summarised below.

Why

- **Planning and commissioning** – ensuring that the development and use of social capital to benefit older and disabled people is embedded in local strategies. You can use the tool as part of analytical and development processes to produce the sustainable communities strategy; the joint strategic needs assessment; and strategies for meeting the needs of particular groups of people

- **Locality working and community development** – bringing local people, commissioners, providers and community associations together to use the planning tool build a picture of their local area and to jointly plan new developments

- **Provider development –** individual universal or targeted service providers using the planning tool to review and further develop their current service provision

- **Integrated service pathway development** – using the planning tool to further developing pathways to ensure that they make best use of and further develop the social capital of older and disabled people.

How

The checklist can be used by:

- **Individuals** – to develop their own understanding of the local picture and what they might do to improve it

- **Groups** – pooling their knowledge and developing a joint action plan.

One way of using the tool would be as part of a workshop. Try to involve a range of stakeholders, including people using services, so you get a full and rich picture of your local situation. This might involve the following workshop design:

Objectives

To enable participants to:

- Understand what is meant by social capital and the role it plays in the lives of older and disabled people

- Extend their knowledge of what can undermine, and what can be done to enable the development and use of, social capital

- Familiarise themselves with the social capital planning tool

- Use the planning tool to understand the local picture and identify key development priorities.

Workshop format

10.00 **Introductions and overview**

Briefing

A quick introduction to the role that the three key aspects of social capital can play in the lives of older and disabled people: social networks; community associations; and the interactions with others when they are out and about.

Small groups

Group members introduce themselves and give examples of the roles that the three aspects of social capital play in their own lives.

Plenary

Sharing of some of the examples

10.30 **Social capital: the big picture**

Presentation and discussion

A more in depth description of social capital, its positive and negative impacts, what can be done to develop it, the role that universal and targeted services can play in unwittingly undermining it and what they and local people can do to enable its development and use.

11.15 **Coffee**

11.30 **Enabling the development and use of social capital**

Briefing

The aims and working process to be used

Small groups

Each group is provided with a different problematic social capital scenario, for example:

Social networks – an isolated elderly person with no easily accessible friends and whose neighbours stay at arms length.

Membership of groups – a community group that is happy to provide activities for older and disabled people but cannot see how they could contribute to the association's activities.

What it's like to live here - the harassment of people with learning disabilities in local parks

A universal service – that is nominally open to all but unwittingly puts barriers in the way of older and disabled people.

A targeted service – that operates in way that requires a person to make a lot of use of their social capital to be able to use the service.

The groups are also provided with a series of flash cards each containing an innovative example of developing and using social capital.

Each group is tasked with coming up with a no or low cost solution.

Plenary

Groups pool their findings and the facilitator helps participants to draw out the active principles that underpin their solutions and the common threads that run through the different solutions.

12.45   Lunch

1.30   The checklist

Briefing

Explaining the rationale that underpins the checklist, its structure and uses

Individuals

Space to read through the checklist

Plenary

Clarifying the checklist and its uses

2.00   Using the checklist

Briefing

The pre-agreed focus for using the checklist
and the working process is explained.

Groups

Are asked to focus on different section of the planning tool
and against each statement in their section:

- **Give an example of something
  that has already been achieved**

- **Describe what was done that
  contributed most to that achievement**

- **Identify a priority issue that now
  needs to be tackled.**

3.15   Tea

3.30

Plenary

Each group feeds back on its overall impression of progress within
its allocated section of the checklist; highlights one example of
good practice; and one priority issue that should now be tackled.

(The results of each group's work will be written up
as part of the report of the workshop).

4.00   Next steps

Briefing

How the outcomes of the workshop will be used
to further develop social capital

4.15   Close

7 What should you do next?

Once you have used the workshop or gone through the process of assessing your local organisation or against the 'Gold Standard' statements in the checklist you could take some of the following actions. These suggestions will help you build and develop a plan for ensuring that you make the most of and build social capital in local communities.

1 To find out more about social capital

See the Building Community Capacity website for more information on social capital and the role it can play in social care transformation.

2 To find out more about your local social capital

Map what you've got going on around social capital in the area you want to focus on (e.g. strengthening social networks for older people). What groups or organisations are already active in your area that could help?

3 Assess the impact of your service/services in your area on social capital

Use Does it work? A guide to evaluating capacity-building projects, to work through what your service does or what a group of projects is doing and the likely impact on social networks, membership of groups, what it's like to live here and being able to make a contribution.

4 Get others on board

This is wider than health and social care and wider than the public sector. Share your findings widely and try to include as many people and stakeholders as possible. Can the Local Strategic Partnership and Health and Wellbeing Board use this model to develop a prevention and health improvement strategy through strengthening communities? Can you undertake a similar exercise in different localities in your area to develop a place-based plan for each?

5 To get inspiration or find out how others are doing it

Read the case studies on our website that relate to your situation. Read the reports and watch the DVD from our Dragons' Den on the successful ways that others have gone about building social capital.

6 Commissioners

Make sure you are commissioning with social capital outcomes in mind (social networks, membership of groups,

friendly place to live and making a positive contribution). See the Lancashire and Camden case studies in particular. Develop the market for building community capacity.

7 Providers

Think about how all aspects of your service could promote social capital outcomes – can you feed this into your business plan? Do you need to do staff development, training, get to know the local community more in order to help people who use your services build their own community connections? See these case studies: IAS; Wight Home Care and more at www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/Browse/blueprint

8 Community and voluntary sector organisations

Think how your work can contribute to this agenda; demonstrate how you are building social networks and giving people the chance to join groups or make a contribution to their community.

9 All – find ways of proving your social and financial value

Community initiatives can be vulnerable in difficult financial times and therefore must have a cost effective impact. Build an understanding of what you spend and what you get back – use the evaluation tool to help you think about outcomes, and read the section on our website which relates to cost-savings. We have done a literature review to find all the available evidence on capacity-building and cost savings and we have also commissioned our own research. Professor Martin Knapp et al's study shows how much money can be saved can be made by timebanks, befriending and community navigator schemes. We have also found calculations of the financial benefits of community development projects, expert patient programmes, mental health promotion, volunteering and the savings demonstrated by the Partnerships for Older People's Projects (POPPs).

We are developing thoughts around a simple tool for evaluating cost-effectiveness and will share these with you as they progress.

8 Appendix

Table 3 Linking social capital to Think Local Act Personal 2

Broad outcome themes	Specific Outcomes	What Think Local Act Personal says	The role of social capital
Health and wellbeing and quality of life	• Easy access to essential services • Support from non-state services to live independently • Feeling positive about life • The local environment acts to support healthier lifestyles and enables people to make informed choices about their health and wellbeing • Personalised services	• As many people as possible enabled to stay healthy and actively involved in communities delaying or avoiding the need for targeted services • Targeted joint prevention strategies, partnership working and effective, efficient, integrated service delivery, reducing duplication and improving outcomes • Making best use of universal services and resources across the public sector including housing, leisure, culture, transport, health and community safety • Workforce skills and style of working helps people use their personal, family and community capacity	• **Social networks** – reduce isolation, support emotional well being • **Community associations** – enable access to sports and recreational activities • **What it's like to live here** – tailoring universal facilities such as transport and leisure for all opens up opportunities to be active • **Being able to contribute** – better and more efficient services, empowerment, increased wellbeing

Broad outcome themes	Specific Outcomes	What Think Local Act Personal says	The role of social capital
Choice and control	• Co-production of services and community support • Perception of ability to influence local decision making • Perceived control over own health • Satisfaction with knowledge about local services and resources	• Actively involve people, carers, families and communities in commissioning and service development • More personalised, community-based, affordable, flexible and niche support • Support to local voluntary organisations and mutual self-help schemes, small community grants, business advice to social enterprises • Provision of support planning and advisory services that make better use of user-led independent and voluntary sector resources	• **Social networks –** enable people to be supported by friends, neighbours and others who can also liaise with services • **Community associations –** increase their membership through being inclusive • **What it's like to live here** – having a choice of services and facilities and being asked to help plan and develop them builds satisfaction and empowers people • **Being able to contribute** – directly gives choice and control, having a voice, being able to influence

Broad outcome themes	Specific Outcomes	What Think Local Act Personal says	The role of social capital
Inclusion, participation and social engagement	• Sense of connection to family, friends and neighbours • Sense of connection to the local community • Opportunities for engagement • Ability to make a positive contribution to others in the community • Participation in local groups, networks, events • Sense that local contribution is valued • Perception of support available from others in the community • Access to public transport, local services and community facilities supports participation in the local community	• Mobilising people's own expertise and resources to meet their care and support needs • People and communities playing a bigger role in supporting themselves and others; encourage networks of support in communities • Engage with local networks and community associations and make best use of universal services and resources across the public sector • Work with providers to promote greater community connection – support should allow people to retain or regain the benefits of community membership and make a positive contribution to the communities they live in	• **Social networks** – provide both real and felt connections to friends and neighbours • **Community associations** – offer opportunities for older and disabled people to volunteer and work with others to influence the development of local services • **What it's like to live here** – ensuring public transport is available, feels safe and is accessible to older and disabled people; pavements and road crossings meet their needs, enables people to access services and facilities and be part of the local community • **Being able to contribute** – encourages participation and inclusion, builds community links

Broad outcome themes	Specific Outcomes	What Think Local Act Personal says	The role of social capital
Dignity and Safety	• Respected by others and sense of personal safety • People feel they are treated equally and with respect, their human rights are respected and the are free from discrimination • People are protected as far as possible from abuse, neglect and self harm • Local partners act together to minimise the risks to the safety and welfare of their local communities • Personal, tailored and responsive services and staff	• Risk management and safeguarding should be addressed in a balanced way across all sections of the community • Organisational and professional culture and practices to adapt to allow a greater role for people and to shape their own support • Effective, efficient, integrated service delivery, reducing duplication and improving outcomes • Personalised, community-based, flexible and niche support	• **Social networks** – can provide older and disabled people with the support they need to get fair treatment from services and that their safety concerns are taken seriously • **Community associations** – can help identify anti-social behaviour and liaise with the police and others to reduce or eliminate it • **What it's like to live here** – tackling both anti-social behaviour and fear of it enhances people's willingness and ability to get out and about in the local community • **Being able to contribute** – older and disabled people are visible and valued contributors and their voice is heard

Broad outcome themes	Specific Outcomes	What Think Local Act Personal says	The role of social capital
Trust and social cohesion	• Satisfaction with living in the area • Perception of shared values • Sense of trust in neighbours and local community • Perception that neighbours in the area look after each other	• Make and sustain evidence-based investments which maximise community capacity • Support the contribution of the wider community; encourage networks of support in communities • Engage with local networks and community associations and make best use of universal services and resources across the public sector	• **Social networks** – having helpful and friendly neighbours and also friends in the area increases satisfaction with both home and neighbourhood • **Community associations** – that are inclusive develop wider collaborative links between local people • **What it's like to live here** – being able to get out and about provides older and disabled people with the opportunity to meet a wider range of local people • **Being able to contribute** – empowered people, increased wellbeing and satisfaction, respected and valued