



Locality Network Review Report

October 2018

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Executive Summary

Introduction

In August 2018 a review of the Locality Networks was undertaken. This comprised of an online survey and a data review of feedback from all 43 networks that had taken place in the eighteen months since their inception. The aim was to ascertain whether the networks were meeting their intended aim as set out in the Core Principles document. Information was also gathered to inform how the networks could be improved. A wide range of views were given by practitioners from all sectors and the Voluntary Action Staff and Locality Link Workers who administer each of the eight Locality Networks.

Main Findings

The networks are attended by a wide range of practitioners from the Public Sector, Community and Voluntary Sector and the Independent and Business Sectors. The unanimous feedback was that the network meetings were valued and considered successful for the opportunity to network, sharing ideas and learning about what is happening in the local area, and the opportunity to build relationships, partnerships and collaborative working.

All networks were able to provide examples of where positive outcomes and other impact could be demonstrated. This ranged from large collaborative projects, such as the Seaford Befriending Project, to small organisations that had partnered together to provide mutual support (Hailsham Active and Battle Pathways). Some organisations had linked together to provide better services to their clients (Autism Sussex and Rye Community Garden), and many had found out about, and been successful accessing, new funding sources.

Suggestions were made about how the networks could be improved and build upon. These included the continuing need to get the right people in the room, both from across sectors and also specific smaller community organisations. There was a desire from participants that the networks be more action focussed building upon the valuable networking and relationships building. There was a clear request that communications improve, both about network events and also within networks themselves. Some survey respondents suggested that there could be a clearer link in with the wider strategic picture. Although the networks are intended to focus on local priorities with a grassroots approach, it is important that they do not function as a standalone entity, and do link in to other decision making forums.

Some of the challenges which were highlighted do not have an easy answer. The issue of geography creates complications when delivering the Core Principles. High Weald and Rural Rother both cover large rural areas with many different communities within them, each with their own priorities. Lewes and the Havens, and Hailsham and Polegate both consist of different communities who do not relate to each other or easily see commonalities.

Conclusion

The 8 Locality Networks have been meeting the aim originally set out in the Core Principles. Feedback received from both survey respondents and the meeting evaluations demonstrate that attendees value the networks and see them as worthwhile events which have a positive impact on their work and local community. There are areas for development, and now that the original aims are embedded into the network processes, it is a good time to revisit what the networks can and should achieve.

Recommendations

1. **Continue to create time and space to enable discrete networking**
2. **Continue to prioritise attracting a wide range of participants from across all sectors**
3. **Value and support volunteers**
4. **Improve communications**
5. **Expand the purpose of the networks to include 'being action focused' and explore options to improve links to informing strategy and decision making**
6. **Develop digital communications**

1. Introduction:

1.1 Background

Locality Networks were set up in response to feedback from the Public Health Building Stronger Communities Engagement process in the autumn of 2016. Organisations and people living and working in communities were asked what could be done to build more resilient communities, and so contribute to improved health and wellbeing outcomes. Participants suggested that one of the ways this could be achieved was by providing more opportunities to network and build relationships, share information, resources and good practice and also provide opportunities for mutual support and learning.

This feedback led to the creation of eight Locality Networks across East Sussex in April 2017, each delivering four network meetings a year. The Locality Networks bring together local people, organisations and communities to share knowledge, insight and experience about their locality and the health, wellbeing and care support provided within it. The networks are guided by the Core Principles document [appendix 1], covering purpose and characteristics, as well as guidance for membership and meeting structure.

The networks are funded by East Sussex County Council and co-produced by the Locality Link Workers and the three Voluntary Actions; 3VA, Rother Voluntary Action and Hastings Voluntary Action. Each Locality Network meeting is themed as set out in the Core Principles. Networks respond to the priorities and interests of the participants and set themes accordingly. Network themes that have taken place have ranged from community food and outdoor spaces to falls and frailty.

The eight networks are:

- Bexhill
- Eastbourne
- Hailsham and Polegate
- Hastings and St Leonards
- High Weald
- Lewes & Havens
- Rural Rother
- Seaford

1.2 Purpose of the review

We wanted to know how well the Locality Networks are meeting the Core Principles, whether they are working for local practitioners and organisations and what could be done to improve them. Forty three Network meetings have taken place across the eight Localities in the seventeen months since they began. It is a good time to take stock of where we are, assess what has worked well so far and where we want to take the networks in the future.

A Locality Network Review Scope document was produced in June 2018, stating the four main aims:

- a. Ensure LNs are delivering on strategic aims and objectives as stated in March 2017 proposals
- b. Share learning across LNs
- c. Identify areas for development in 2018/9
- d. Inform future plans for LNs beyond March 2019 and exit strategy for LLW service

This document has provided the foundation for this review. For the purpose of the online survey the language has been adapted to be more user friendly and understandable from an operational, rather than strategic, point of view. All aspects have been included in this report, and for clarity a RAG rated table has been included as an appendix.

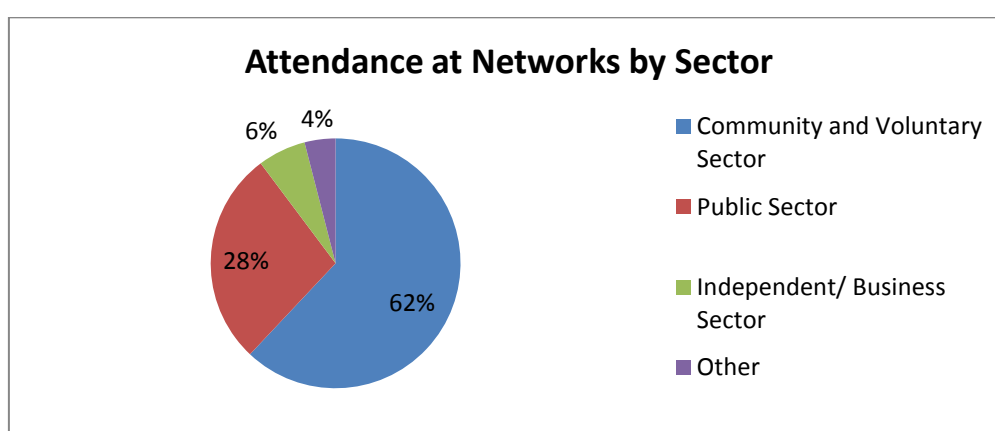
1.3 Approach

The review comprised of an online survey which was open from 23 July until 14 August, with 104 people responding [appendix 2]. Further information was sourced from evaluations and feedback from each of the forty three individual network meetings between April 2017 and August 2018 which had taken place at the time of the review. Input was also sought from all of the people who support and administer the Locality Networks comprising of nine Locality Link Workers and staff from the three Voluntary Actions.

2. Review Findings

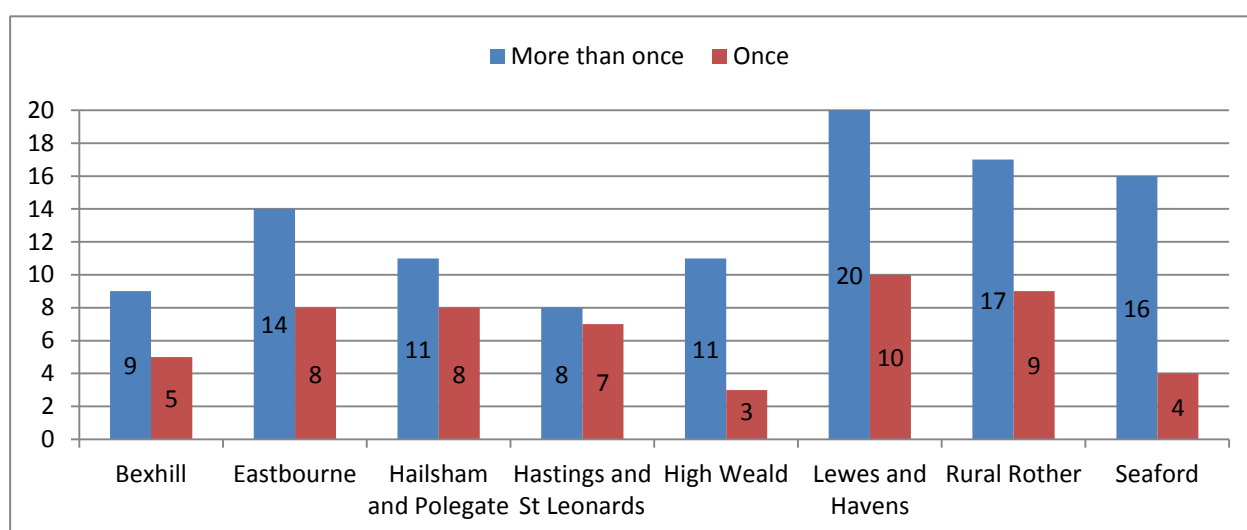
2.1 Who attends the Networks?

Since April 2017 there have been a total of 43 Network meetings across all 8 Localities. On average attendance varies between twenty-five to forty people per meeting, however where there have been larger 'marketplace' events attendance has reached seventy-five.



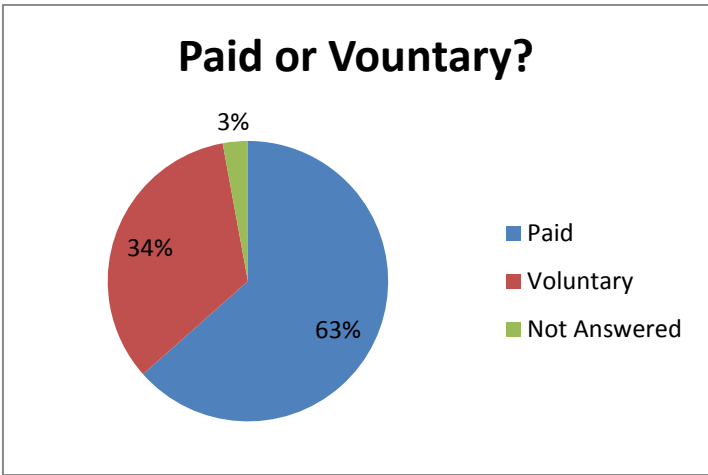
104 people responded to the online survey; 66% from the Community and Voluntary Sector, 24% from the Public Sector, 8% from the Independent and Business Sectors and 2% other. This broadly reflects the breakdown of attendees at the networks themselves. Survey findings showed that all networks had a higher proportion of respondents who had attended Locality Networks more than once rather than once only.

Which of the locality networks have you attended?



The Locality Networks aim to deliver a multi-sector forum that is open to anyone that works in or supports local communities. Survey respondents were asked to provide their job role (over 85% did), and there were a good range of roles including manager roles such as CEO, MD, chair, director and manager, practitioner roles such as proactive care and Occupational Therapists, provider roles such as registered manager and scheme manager, project roles such as project manager and strategy officer, community roles such as development, engagement and support and volunteer coordinator roles. There are also some people who have attended as volunteers or who are self-employed.

We asked survey respondents to tell us whether they attended in a paid or voluntary capacity:



Roughly a third of all respondents attended the network in an unpaid capacity. When these figures are further broken down we can see that community and voluntary sector have a far higher proportion of people attending in an unpaid capacity.

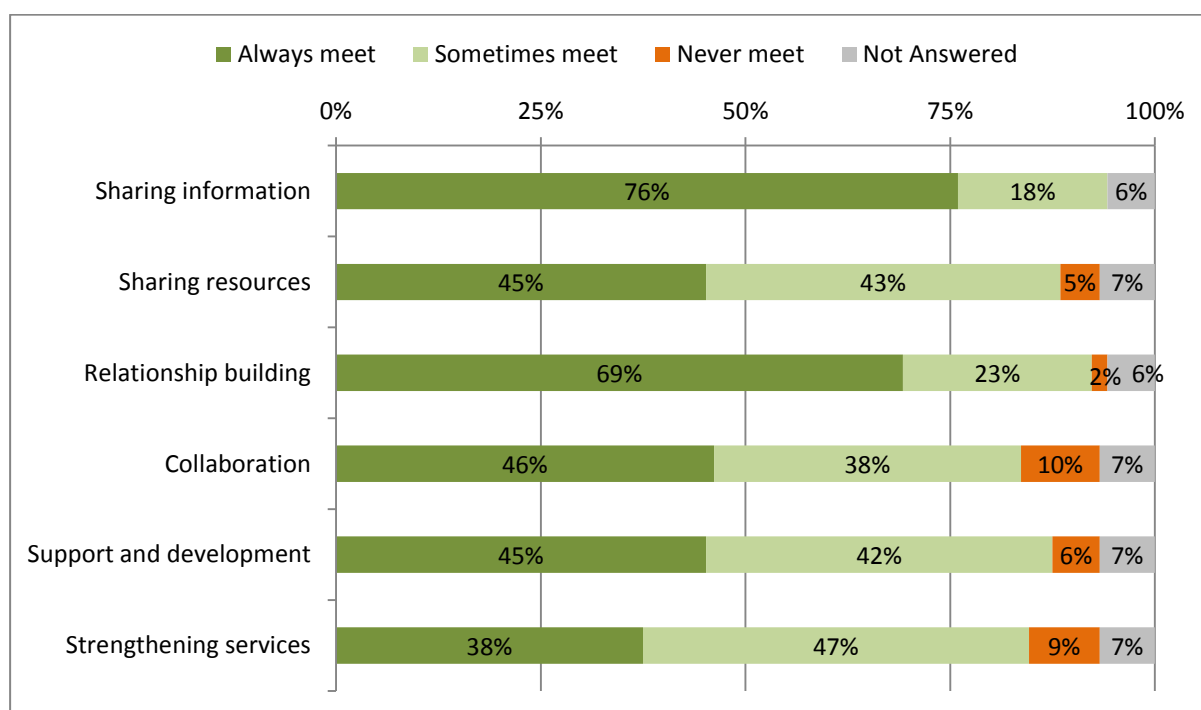
Sector	Paid		Unpaid		Not Answered	
	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.
C&VS	54%	32	44%	26	2%	1
Public Sector	87%	20	9%	2	4%	1
Independent/ Business	63%	5	25%	2	13%	1
Other	67%	8	33%	4	0%	0

Responses to the survey questions from those people attending in an unpaid capacity generally didn’t differ from those respondents who attend in a paid capacity.

2.2 Are the Networks meeting their intended aims?

The online survey asked respondents their thoughts on whether the networks they had attended were meeting the purpose and characteristics set out in the Core Principles of the Network document.

Do the networks you have attended mainly meet the purposes set out in the framework?

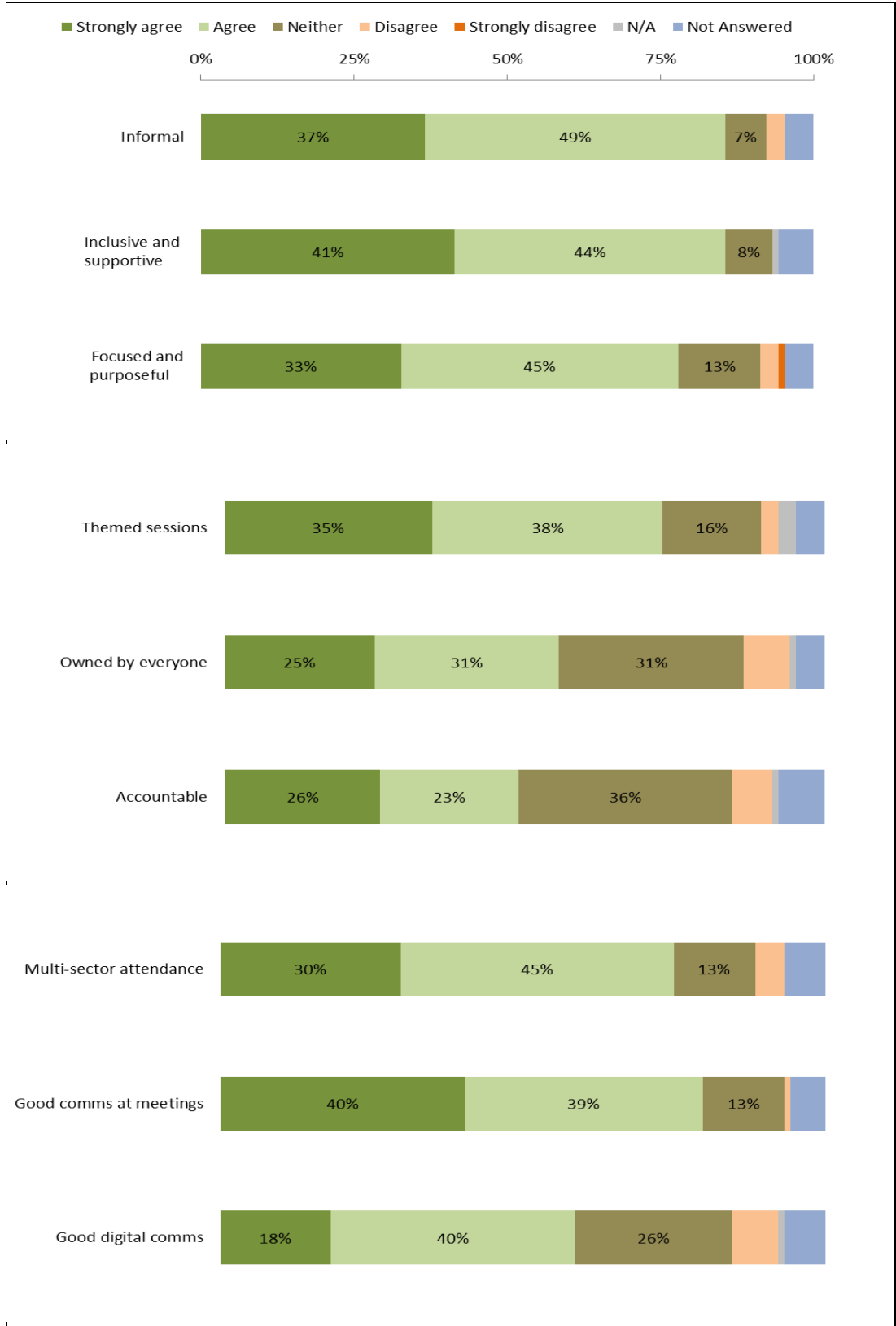


The response to this question demonstrates that there are overwhelmingly positive experiences of the networks always or sometimes meeting the purpose as set out in the Core Principles framework. The lowest performing area still received 84% of positive feedback. However, there are two areas which the Networks are performing particularly well at (sharing information and relationship building) and three areas where there is room for improvement (collaboration, support and development and strengthening services).

Respondents were asked whether anything else should be added to the network purpose, and a range of ideas were suggested;

- An emergent purpose based on the people and groups that attend
- Further opportunities for joint project working
- Reporting back from those involved in strategic planning
- Actions agreed at the end of a meeting and some accountability

How much do you agree or disagree that the networks you have attended meet the characteristics set out in the framework?



The responses show that there are three characteristic areas where the networks are not performing as well as they could be; owned by everyone, accountable and good digital communications. The respondents that answered that these questions with ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ represented attendees covering all of the networks, and the majority had attended specific Locality Networks on more than one occasion while only three had been to networks in more than one Locality.

The best performing characteristics were that the networks were informal, inclusive and supportive and had good communications at the meetings.

‘The network has allowed me to meet like-minded people/groups/charities that I have been able to collaborate on projects with or shared good practices or ideas.’

2.3 What’s Working Well?

Feedback has been gathered from participants at all of the network meetings that have occurred to date. This has been collated and key themes have been drawn out. While this does not capture all the issues and priorities which arise in individual localities, it provides a comprehensive overview of themes and issues which have emerged across the county.

86% of the online survey respondents felt that attending a network had made lots or some difference to their work in the community and 79% felt that the links and connections made at the networks had benefited their organisation or community.

a) Networking,

Feedback from all networks showed that the networking itself was the most useful part of the meetings and a great way to meet and link with others. They all reported that participants valued the opportunity to make new connections and build contacts. Hastings shared that “the networks have been energetic and those who have attended consistently report how they have enabled them to learn about services, engage with other organisations and get a clearer sense of what is going on”. It was felt that events were largely inclusive and attracted a wide range of participants. New people attended all the networks suggesting that they are seen as welcoming and open to all. Rural Rother shared that “the majority of positive feedback related to the significant value of meeting new people, putting names to faces and finding peer support”.

Participants and survey respondents also evidence this;

‘Meeting new people who give inspiration to carry on what I am doing’

‘Great to meet some of the smaller groups in Rother, half of which I have not been aware of until now’

‘Networking, finding out about new initiatives, collaboration problem solving and creating a cohesive and inclusive community’

‘I was able to communicate with key partners with which I can work, ideas were formed that I can action with learners’

‘Running a small group can be isolating... so networking like this is great’

‘We have developed new relationships with new colleagues at the networks that have filtered out into our work with families and benefited many families in East Sussex’

‘Establishing direct links with voluntary and statutory sector colleagues has enabled me to focus developing projects in a really positive way’

b) Sharing Ideas and Learning

Related to networking, participants also valued the space to share ideas and learning between peers. High Weald fed back that their network is “seen as invaluable for sharing information and lead to a better understanding of the services offered by other groups”. Participants had shared how they had supported effective collaboration and joint working; “several ideas came to mind in the areas of working together as well as funding”. Lewes and The Havens felt that information sharing was a particular

strength of their network, and that they had engaged a range of very informative speakers to the benefit of participants. Their network attracts a higher number of statutory organisation practitioners where others had struggled. The network themed on Falls, Frailty and Self Care had more attendees from Local Government and Health than the community and voluntary sector.

'I have met people who have shared good practice and others who have actually provided sessions and entertainment for my residents'

'Awareness of services/ resources and how to access. Have been able to access more support for patients, enabling them to become part of the local community.'

c) Partnerships and Collaboration

All the networks recognised and were able to evidence partnerships and collaborations which have developed because of the networks, both within the community and voluntary sector, and also between the community and voluntary sector and the public and independent sectors. High Weald and Hailsham and Polegate both felt that their most successful network meetings were where they had co-produced the event with the organisations that had hosted them. They stated "we wanted to demonstrate active collaboration and co-operation. Our approach was to showcase community assets, so others could be inspired by their work and draw upon the experience of existing groups to develop ideas further".

Seaford Network fed back that there had been "a groundswell of enthusiasm for more joint working" and that "the meetings have been well attended and have been facilitated to encourage lively, interactive discussion... it does feel like there is a sense of ownership among participants and that the issues under discussion are of genuine interest and relevance to participants".

Participants said;

'In just one year we've met various organisations who we've collaborated with and hosted a network ourselves. We've also got funding through advice from other attendees which has been significant for us'

'We have been able to offer our facilities to different groups who would not have previously known about our existence'

'We have hosting health checks for our users at the foodbank through 2 organisations at the network meeting. We've been able to signpost our users to other groups in the community that we were not aware of the services they offered before.'

2.4 Examples of Impact and positive outcomes of the networks

Each of the eight Locality Networks have identified and responded to the local priorities in their own unique way. All have evidenced developmental activity or services which have arisen from the networks, and also provided examples of how the network has supported and enabled new activity.

a) Improving awareness of the networks

In several of the networks a priority was to improve communication and knowledge among participants as well as in the wider community. Several of the networks have used the meetings to showcase participant organisations either through holding 'market place' events, or through partnering with local groups to host the network meetings. Both the High Weald Network and Hailsham and Polegate have used this model to particular success, through planning and delivering the meetings in partnership with the groups that are hosting them. This has included MAYFACS, the Eco-hub and the East Hoathly and Halland Community Garden (Case Study 1). This model has provided the opportunity for the host organisation to promote and celebrate their work, and also provided the participants the opportunity to see and be inspired by what others are doing in the community.

Case Study 1

Collaboration and co-production delivering the networks: High Weald

The High Weald Mental Health themed network was in part held outdoors at the East Hoathly & Halland Community Garden, a project inspired by the founder's personal experience of ill health and a desire to support others to use therapeutic gardening as an aid to recovery. The combination of his own lived experience and observing the project in situ very clearly engaged participants and helped to highlight and illustrate the issues faced by those with mental health needs.

This was followed by a presentation from the East Sussex Community Network (ESCN) Partnership Navigator who described the network of services provided through Southdown. The network provides recovery-focused services supporting people to get well and stay well.

Together the two presentations encouraged a very productive discussion about the need to reduce the stigma of mental health and how people might better access meaningful activities in the community. From this discussion, the idea of 'Village Buddies' and community safe spaces to support those with mental health needs arose. A planning meeting has been booked to explore these ideas further for which there has been an overwhelmingly positive response from a range of multi-sector partners. It is unlikely this collaboration would have happened without the community network.

Rural Rother developed a Members Booklet in response to requests from the participants to know more about who was attending, but also to raise awareness in the wider community about the range of services available in the area. Participants had identified that they felt relationships with GP practices and Parish Councils could be improved, so the booklet was distributed to all 7 GP practices and 29 Parish and Town Councils.

b) Healthy Activities

Several of the Networks developed activities focusing on health and healthy activities. Eastbourne and Seaford have been supporting and influencing the development of children and young people's mental health provision. Lewes and the Havens have developed a model for 'planning care in later life' events in partnership with local GP practices, Adult Social Care and the community and voluntary sector, which has been successfully delivered in two Lewes practices, and scheduled for Peacehaven. Eastbourne Network particularly focused on health and wellbeing and partnered with a range of cross sector organisations to plan, co-ordinate and deliver an event at the local outside gym to promote healthy living and activity, and its contribution to wellbeing (Case Study 2). The Seaford Network enabled contacts to be made between organisations leading to the development of the Men's Meals project. Bringing together local community groups, volunteers and health professionals, this cookery course for men has been very successful in attracting participants, some of whom have gone on to volunteer for the programme once they have completed their course. Funding was secured through the Building Stronger Communities grant and Rampion to enable the project to continue, and it is now also being developed into a men's lunch club, encouraging healthy eating as well as social support.

Case Study 2

Utilising the Outside Gyms – working to improve the health of others: Eastbourne

Partnering with Beat the Streets, Health Champions, Proactive Care Practitioners, Eastbourne Sports and Tesco's Community Champions, the LLW organised and promoted an open event at the Archery Outside Gym. This also involved planning a morning of events to look at health, using the equipment, exercise, diet and promoting not only the use of the gym but other local resources.

The event was promoted in a wide range of settings including sheltered housing, large food stores, through various community groups and digitally. Posters and flyers were displayed in the surrounding streets to encourage local people. 50 people attended learning how to use the equipment at the gym and how other exercise and healthy eating can support a healthy lifestyle.

The outside gym has seen an increase in its number of users which in turn encourages yet more people to use this resource. A local slimming club encourages participants to consider using this as their 'body magic' and young people have been shown how to use the equipment safely and correctly. Older people had said they lacked confidence to use this resource on their own, they either didn't know how to use the equipment or they felt embarrassed. More people have overcome this lack of confidence and this provision is now much better used.

Further work has taken place at the Pevensey outside gym with a small group of walkers who attend the Monday TCV Healthy Walk and as part of this walkers stop off at the gym for a short amount of exercise being shown how to use the equipment.

c) Befriending and Buddying

The issue of loneliness, social isolation and what might be done to tackle it has arisen in several of the networks. The Seaford Network has developed a range of projects focussing on befriending, including the Good Gym, a gardening intergenerational project (Case Study 3), a life stories intergenerational project, Cycling without Age and a traditional home-visiting befriending project. Two of these projects are in the process of being handed over to local groups to take a lead to ensure sustainability. Two have already received funding and further funding bids are in process.

From the meeting themed around Mental Health, The High Weald Network identified a need to address the issue of marginality, stigma and lack of confidence experienced by those with mental health issues in rural areas. A steering group is being established between a range of cross sector organisations working in the Locality to explore ideas and possibilities around 'village buddies, mental health champions and safe spaces'. Small local community groups will be working in partnership with Southdown, the commissioned community provider, 3VA and the ESCC Locality Link Workers to develop a local solution.

Case Study 3

Children's Centre Garden - partnership project development: Seaford

As part of the Seaford Locality Network meetings focusing on intergeneration projects the Children's Centre garden was identified as an idea that the group wanted to take forward. The Children's Centre, Locality Link Worker, Sussex Wildlife Trust Burleys and Cradle Hill School came together to explore possibilities. They wanted older residents to support the children in tidying and planting the garden. This would give the children from the schools' additional needs class and older residents the opportunity to work together in the garden.

Plans have been discussed for the garden and funding has been provided by Sussex Wildlife Trust. It was decided that they will bring the children and older volunteers together starting in September to garden together. They would like to set up bug hotels and chalk garden.

Sussex Wildlife Trust have agreed to fund and run the project. They have volunteers to help and they will also encourage the Proactive Care Practitioner and Advance Nurse Practitioner to refer people to the project. The LLW will liaise with the PCP to start to bring in older social isolated people to the project once it is up and running. Sussex Wildlife Trust will engage more of their volunteers for this project, and the Children's Centre will liaise with the school to get the children involved.

2.4.1 Partnerships and collaborations

The Networks have enabled a range of new links to be made, which in turn has led to new partnerships and collaborative working:

a) Links between Community and Voluntary Sector and Public & Independent sectors

- ESCC Children's Services linked with Edible Eastbourne: working together to improve the outdoor space by the Archery Youth Club and providing food growing and gardening based activities for a group of disabled young people.

- Sussex Downs College linked with Support with Confidence: one day training event delivered looking at possible careers in health and social care.
- Seaford Head School, two local Rotary Clubs, St James' Trust, Cheney's Lodge, local sheltered housing schemes, the LLW and the Lions club, all linked together to deliver an intergenerational 'Life Stories' project in the school. This has now been taken on by both Rotary Clubs which will ensure its sustainability.

b) Links between Community and Voluntary Sector and Community and Voluntary Sector

- Battle Pathways linked with Hailsham Active: Supporting each other in establishing cycle routes in both areas
- HARC linked with the 1066 Community: enabling HARC to deliver benefits and financial advice session in the rural areas of Rural Rother.
- Autism Sussex linked with Rye Community Garden: Exploring ways young people with autism can volunteer in the garden
- Salvation Army linked with East Sussex Credit Union: working together to support clients to access bank accounts
- Sussex Community Rail Partnership linked with East Sussex Association for the Blind: arranging train trip with members

c) Funding Gained

- East Sussex Fire and Rescue linked with Robertsbridge Helping Hands: Grant given to support Welcome Packs for residents and vulnerable people in the village.
- Building Stronger Communities grants promoted at the High Weald network and participants encouraged to apply, resulting in 8 organisations from the Locality being awarded grants.
- Three organisations from the Hailsham and Polegate network received funding from the Building Stronger Communities grant after hearing about it from the network.
- Polegate Community Association found a new funding source from the Hailsham and Polegate meeting.
- Age UK received funding from Active Sussex after meeting at a Rural Rother network.
- Cycling without Age met the Martello Rotary Club at the Seaford Network and were invited to the club to talk about the project. This resulted in funding and also an offer of storage for the trishaw.

d) Other impact

- East Sussex Hearing Resource Centre has offered signing training to Bexhill network participants.
- ESCC training rolled out to Community and Voluntary Sector in Bexhill delivered at a local health and wellbeing hub
- Eastbourne network has established two special interest networks as a result of their meetings; one for children and young people's organisations and one for a partnership of community food initiatives.
- A training exchange is being explored in the Hastings and St Leonards network with an online exchange portal being developed.
- A Local Leaders Forum has been initiated in Hastings as a result of the 'Small is Beautiful' Small Charities event to share experiences and obtain mutual support.
- Autism Sussex has influenced the Battle Health Pathway project – the planned Nature Garden will now include a sensory garden.
- The Polegate Community Association have had a new toddler garden planted called the Butterfly Patch working with ROTVE Community Project Planning.

2.5 Learning and challenges

Suggestions for improvements to the network were provided through the network evaluation forms, the Locality Link Workers and Voluntary Action staff who administer and deliver the networks and also through the survey. Of the 104 survey respondents, thirty-seven responded to the question about suggesting improvements. Of those thirty-seven, six people said they were working well as they are, while two said they didn't know. The identified areas for improvement fell into six broad themed areas.

a) Getting the right people in the room

All of the networks acknowledged that there were areas which could be improved in the networks. Broadly the challenges experienced were the same; attracting people from the independent and statutory sectors, geography of the Localities creating difficulties, lack of enthusiasm from participants to take activities forward and a need for clarity about how the networks link into strategy.

There was recognition that the time commitment to attend a network meeting might be more than some practitioners can offer, particularly in the current financial climate where there is an expectation to do more for less. Rural Rother felt that "valuing each individual who gives up time to attend the network has been a key part of building a healthy number of attendees, especially in a rural area where it is harder to maintain a good turn-out. Lunch and refreshments have been an important part of this value and should be maintained".

Hastings voiced many network's experiences stating that "the consistent engagement of the private sector in the networks remains a challenge" although also recognises that this is an issue across other forums too. Eastbourne has struggled to engage with GP practices and Lewes and the Havens are aware that there are very small community and voluntary groups who do not attend.

Survey respondents also felt this was an area for improvement:

'If possible inviting healthcare professionals, not necessarily doing talks, but attending so they become more aware of what's available in their communities and we can find ways to disseminate information about what groups offer to those people in our communities who are hard to reach.'

b) Be more action focused

A challenge experienced by nearly all of the networks was the difficulty in taking new projects or activities forward. Reasons for this vary across the county. A lack of continuity of attendees was cited by Rural Rother and Lewes and the Havens as a barrier; "there is evidence that the numbers of core attendees... is relatively small which means that building momentum and continuity and initiating project work is difficult". Rural Rother have similar experiences and state that the high turnover of people attending networks "does not lead to commitment from attendees to work together on a joint project or initiative". It was also acknowledged that the amount of work that supporting additional network projects and activity takes is a huge time commitment, which Voluntary Action staff and Locality Link Workers don't always have the capacity to do.

Survey respondents also identified that they wanted to see more action coming from the networks;

'More capacity to help support those that attend with ideas and projects they want to get off the ground. Facilitating initial meetings is fine, idea shops are fine, but what people usually feel is that the long term support is not there. Connections, community action and local residents need ongoing support. This might not be the job of the locality network per se but they should be an aim to build a structure that can do this.'

c) Geography

Geography also played a key role in preventing more continuity between networks and the development of new initiatives as, in some areas, there isn't a clear community identity which aligns to the Locality. In Rural Rother and High Weald, the large rural footprint of the Localities comprise of many different distinct communities each with their own priorities: "Wealden is a large geographical area,

with wide variation in income levels, access to infrastructure (transport, services, technology), health outcomes. Communities self-identify in unique ways, not always co-terminus with the different health geographies and or local/district boundaries". Rural Rother suggested that there may be more buy in at a more local level.

Other Localities also struggle with an area which isn't recognised as a defined community. Both Lewes and the Havens and Hailsham and Polegate networks find that people don't always travel to meetings out of their community. "People from Lewes don't go to the Havens and vice versa, even the Havens is really at least three quite distinct communities, Newhaven, Peacehaven and Telscombe/ Saltdean". Hailsham and Polegate experience similar problems. This was also raised in some of the comments by survey respondents;

'I think Lewes should have its own network as the area of Newhaven/ Peacehaven doesn't work joined up with Lewes on so many different levels.'

This all leads to obstacles in taking ideas and initiatives forward. While it is recognised that partnerships are forming between regular attendees, and collaboration may be happening, it isn't often under the umbrella of what the network is seeking to achieve as a whole. There are exceptions to this, and there are an increasing amount of projects emerging from the networks. However these are taking extensive time and resources from the LLW and the VA to get off the ground.

d) Communication

Issues around communication about and within the networks wasn't highlighted as an issue through the evaluation and feedback from the meetings, however it was clearly highlighted as an area for development from the survey results. The emerging issues can be grouped into two areas; communication about the networks from the organisers, and how information is made available who is attending the networks.

Good digital communication was the worst performing area of the characteristics of the network, and this was to be expected as there has been no county wide online presence for the networks other than a list of when and where they are taking place. Individual networks have explored member directories and Facebook pages, but to date there is no overarching network approach to this. Respondents felt that information about the network meetings was not sent out with enough notice and feedback after the networks took too long.

'More information about when the meetings are held. This information has been seriously lacking in recent months.'

*'Actions agreed at the end of a meeting and some accountability
Slides and info are sent out - but often much later than is useful as colleagues/managers who didn't attend often want to have feedback the following week'*

Several respondents requested that more information be provided about who is attending each network meeting both to help them know who they want to meet beforehand, and also to help with follow up contacts afterwards.

'Maybe a directory or list of those that attend events so better able to contact if the need arises'

'A list of members and/or when booking - be able to see who else has been invited or has booked up to attend so that delegates can prepare appropriate material to share.'

There were also some comments requesting information to be provided which already routinely is as part of the feedback from the network to participants.

'Follow up and outcomes would be useful to know how the information, shared and collected has been used by 3VA to develop services, opportunities, workshop topics etc'

This is useful as it can inform how we share this information going forward if it seems it is currently being missed by some participants.

e) Clearer Strategic Direction

Several of the networks requested further clarity on future direction and how the networks can use their collective voice to make an impact through linking into strategy, commissioning and other decision making processes. The intention of the networks is to focus on local issues and priorities, rather than respond to county wide strategy, however there is a desire to ensure that the networks are not talking shop and are connected to the wider picture. Feedback is provided into several other forums, including the Locality Planning and Design Groups and some Local Strategic Partnerships for example, however this isn't in a formal or structured way as of yet. Lewes and the Havens gave examples where local insight ranging from interpreting needs to volunteer support had nowhere obvious to escalate to. Participants are also keen that this opportunity is taken;

'there should be something about the networks having a voice and being used to shape the overall thinking of the local, district, parish and county councils. It would be great if they were used for more consultation'

It was also suggested that participants agree on a statement regarding the theme to be fed back to commissioners at the end of each meetings to prevent it just being a 'talking shop'.

Both these suggestions would be a departure from the original aim of the network being led by the participants, rather than shaped by strategic priorities. However there is scope for the networks to have better links into decision making forums to ensure they are an integral part of the overall East Sussex picture, rather than changing their original intention.

f) Network location, structure and frequency

Feedback about the network structures, location and frequency varied greatly across participants, with as many people enthusiastic about certain elements (speed networking for example) as didn't like them at all. One suggested that the format of the networking itself should be rethought;

'It's quite an old fashioned way of networking (sitting around tables) and doesn't include more modern networking tools and processes'

Suggestions were made to change the subject matter to include a wider audience, while others suggested inviting smaller more selective groups. Several suggestions about topic ideas were made including participants offering training, particularly by those working in specialist fields, and also focusing on 'declining public services and funding'.

Some survey respondents wanted more meetings, and were keen that they remain focused on the Localities, and others felt that there were too many and could benefit from grouping Localities together;

'More meetings please rather than every three months'

'One bit of a feedback I have had from my colleagues is that there are a lot of community meetings and it is difficult to keep up with them all. As a countywide organisation it's difficult to have the capacity to be represented at all of them- maybe some joint meetings as well would be helpful'

'I would like to see at least an annual event that covers Hastings, Bexhill and Rural Rother if not more often and this would cut down on the number of meetings that I could have to potentially attend within my part time hours'

This has highlighted that regardless of how well received and appreciated the networks are, they will never be able to be all things to all people.

3. Conclusion

Feedback demonstrates that the Locality Networks have been meeting the aims originally set out at their inception. There are also some areas identified where there is room for improvement. There is now the opportunity and appetite to build upon and enhance the network's current purpose and function.

The Locality Networks are widely considered to be valued and successful forums increasing the opportunities for networking, meeting and learning about local activities, services and groups, and sharing ideas. There were areas which fared less well in the survey such as collaboration and sharing resources. However many examples were provided, both through the network evaluations and the survey, of new partnerships, collaborative projects and activity which had developed as a direct result of the networks. The Networks are reaching a wide range of people working and delivering services in each Locality. There are some challenges to getting all the people we would like to attend, however there is always ongoing work to address this. Attendance varies according to the theme of the meeting, but all networks have a steady and healthy number of participants. One testament to the value and success of the networks is that 1/3 of all network participants and nearly 50% of Community and Voluntary Sector attendees appear to be attending in an unpaid capacity.

After an initial period of 17 months implementing and establishing the networks, there are now clear areas for development to improve and build upon their success. There is a desire to see a new sense of purpose for the networks to become more action focussed, both through network led activity, but also through creating the right structures to support collaboration and idea development between participants.

Communication needs to be improved both about the network events, and also sharing information within the networks. The Core Principles state that the networks will have a digital platform. This has been requested by the participants, and currently the networks haven't been able to deliver that adequately.

Geography continues to cause challenges in a variety of ways, resulting in each network finding their own mitigating solutions to meet the requirements set out in the Core Principles. It may be that each network needs more freedom to respond to the varying needs of their Locality in the way which serves their network the best.

4. Recommendations

1. **Continue to create time and space to enable discrete networking.** As a highly valued aspect of the networks, this needs to remain a core feature of delivery. Participants have contrasting views of what method they found useful and enjoyable, so a variety of methods should be used, and participants given the option to opt out should they wish.
2. **Continue to prioritise attracting a wide range of participants from across all sectors.** While we have made some inroads into attracting people from across the public and independent sectors, participation varied across the networks. It was clearly felt that there was still a need to increase participation from these groups, particularly from GP practices and businesses.
3. **Value and support volunteers.** All network participants need to be valued and made to feel an integral part of each network. However thought should be particularly given to how we support and appreciate those who attend in an unpaid capacity. This can be done in a variety of ways including those and those that do not need resourcing (using inclusive language, highlighting where volunteering has been successful, partnering with volunteer support organisations etc.), and those that may need resourcing (refreshments, travel etc.).

4. **Improve communications.**
 - a) Ensure that information about the network meetings is well publicised with sufficient notice, and all feedback from meetings is also distributed within a reasonable time of the meeting date. This will enable maximum attendance and also enable participants to share and cascade information about the networks in a timely manner.
 - b) Make information about who is attending each network meeting available in advance or clearly available at each event to enhance networking opportunities.
 - c) Share and celebrate stories about network successes. This should include work the network is leading on, but also stories about partnerships and collaborations that have developed because of the network.
 - d) The Core Principles of the Locality Networks should be easily made available at each network meeting to ensure that all participants are aware of its purpose and aims
5. **Expand the purpose of the networks to include 'being action focused' and explore options to improve links to informing strategy and decision making'.** The two areas which were generally felt to be the direction that participants wanted the networks to develop were these. Building on the success and impact of networking, sharing information and learning, by having these new purposes added to the Core Principles it would enable the Localities to have a new focus for meetings and develop structures to support and enable more collaborative working among participants
6. **Develop digital communications.** This is already set in the Core Principles, but the networks are as yet to deliver this in any cohesive meaningful way. Through developing digital delivery, we can improve communication, enable more ways of linking organisations and communities together, and enhance the network provision to exist in a more sustainable meaningful way rather than just during quarterly meetings.

Appendix 1

Core Principles of a Locality Network



Core principles
Locality Networks 2017

Appendix 2

Locality Network Survey Results



Locality networks
survey results (Final S

Appendix 3: Locality Network Review Scoping RAG Table.

Aims		RAG
Aims & objectives of Locality Networks as defined in P&CR Programme Discussion Paper Proposal for Locality Networks, Mar 2017		
1	Wide range of local information gathered and shared	
2	Local resources of all kinds identified, shared and use maximised	
3	New relationships and connections made	
4	New collaborations established on principles of co-production (equal partnerships)	
5	Gaps identified, service developments influenced and/or opportunities to do so through other channels highlighted	
6	Organisational development and learning	
7	Quarterly themed meeting in each locality	
8	No. of participants (minimum of x per event)	
9	Information sharing mechanisms in place (including digital systems)	
10	Resource sharing mechanisms in place (including digital systems)	
11	Opportunities for new relationships and connections created and promoted	
12	Opportunities for collaboration created and promoted	
13	Opportunities for identifying gaps and influencing services promoted and/or created within LN meetings or through other channels	
14	Learning and development opportunities provided and promoted	
15	Wide participation across all types of organisation and sector, with at least x% participation from the public/independent sector in particular	
16	Involvement of all relevant local networks in some form	
17	Appropriate links made to relevant county wide groups/forums (existing and emerging)	
18	Participants experience LNs as: informal, interactive, creative, enjoyable, focussed, supportive, inclusive, purposeful, jointly owned across sectors and accessible physically and digitally	
19	Representation across all local communities of interest and place, including 'protected groups'.	
KPIs for Locality Network meetings in P&CR Programme		
20	8 localities hosts 4 network meetings each per year	
21	Participants are spread across different sectors/orgs	
22	Networks action plan in response to identified need	
23	Feedback from participants to demonstrate connections made and impact of participating in network meetings (individuals, organisations, locality, system)	
24	Work with community and voluntary sector on development projects to set up services/activities in response to unmet need	
25	Feedback from Network meetings into Locality Planning / Planning and Delivery Groups / Communities of Practice / other appropriate channels	

Appendix 4: Action Plan

Recommendation		Action	Timescale	Who is responsible
1	Continue to create time and space to enable discrete networking	Continue to build in discrete networking in to agenda for each network meeting. Liaise with the networks where geography has been flagged as a challenge to explore options for incorporating smaller community based networking opportunities within the wider network meetings.	Ongoing	LLWs and VAs
2	Continue to prioritise attracting a wide range of participants from across all sectors	Each network to monitor and review attendance, targeting invitations where necessary to attract a representative cross section of the locality.	Ongoing	LLWs and VAs
3	Value and support volunteers	All networks to ensure language used is inclusive for all sectors, including volunteers. Links to be strengthened with volunteer hubs to ensure they are represented and that attendees have information about support. Undertake further analysis of the survey to ascertain if there are any additional support needs identified for people attending in an unpaid capacity.	Ongoing	RT, LLWs and VAs
4	Improve communications a) Ensure that information about the network meetings is well publicised with sufficient notice, and all feedback from meetings is also distributed within a reasonable time of the meeting date. This will enable maximum attendance and also enable participants to share and cascade information about the networks in a timely manner.	a) Set an agreed timescale to include how far in advance networks are advertised and how soon feedback can be shared after meetings. Communicate this with network participants. b) Each network to explore with participants what information they want	Nov 2018 Dec 2018	VAs and LLWs VAs and LLWs

	<p>b) Make information about who is attending each network meeting available in advance or clearly available at each event to enhance networking opportunities.</p> <p>c) Share and celebrate stories about network successes. This should include work the network is leading on, but also stories about partnerships and collaborations that have developed because of the network.</p> <p>d) The Core Principles of the Locality Networks should be easily made available at each network meeting to ensure that all participants are aware of its purpose and aims.</p>	<p>shared and how best to do this.</p> <p>c) Encourage participants to share their success stories. Share the Community Resilience process re sharing good news stories. Use these stories in the networks as well as in any network feedback.</p> <p>d) Core Principles to be available at all network meetings. Explore possibility of uploading them to the Locality Network page on the ESCC website.</p>	<p>January 2019 then ongoing</p> <p>Nov 2018 then ongoing</p>	<p>RT, VAs and LLWs</p> <p>VAs, LLWs and RT</p>
5	Expand the purpose of the networks to include ‘being action focused’ and ‘inform strategy and decision making’	Ensure space on agenda at end of each network meeting to confirm key actions and feedback mechanisms, e.g. through Needed & Desired Services List (ESCC ASC), infrastructure support offer (VAs), local decision making forums etc.	December 2018	VAs, LLWs, RT
6	Develop digital communications	Explore use of existing platforms to provide digital presence	March 2019	VAs, LLWs, RT

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