

Getting Started in Wave 2 Big Local areas: key findings

What were residents planning to do in Wave 2 Big Local areas?

Key findings

Background

Big Local is an exciting opportunity for residents in 150 areas around England to use at least £1m each to make a lasting positive difference to their communities. It is about bringing together all the local talent, ambitions, skills and energy from individuals, groups and organisations who want to make their area an even better place to live. The four programme outcomes for Big Local are:

- communities will be better able to identify local needs and take action in response to them.
- people will have increased skills and confidence, so that they continue to identify and respond to needs in the future
- the community will make a difference to the needs it prioritises
- people will feel that their area is an even better place to live.

Big Local was launched in areas in three waves of 50 areas. The second wave was announced in February 2012. To support people in these areas in the early stages of Big Local, Getting Started funding of up to £20,000 was made available to the second set of 50 Big Local areas in 2012 (Wave 2). To access the funding each Big Local area, with support from their Big Local rep, submitted a Getting Started proposal. This report is based on an analysis of these proposals which were submitted by 44 Big Local areas.

Key Facts

Total spending planned - £997,314

Amount of match funding - £137,711

Funds allocated to:

- workers - £247,456
- events - £163,540
- marketing and communications - £121,962
- training, learning and development - £75,210
- administration costs - £67,221
- services - £63,450
- small grants - £53,012
- equipment and resources - £39,093
- producing profile or plan - £24,519
- expenses - £21,246
- venue hire - £16,010
- refreshments - £3,150

The model for Getting Started

- make sure everyone knows about Big Local
- mobilise your assets
- reach out to people
- give as many people as possible the opportunity to contribute their views
- have a person to coordinate
- have some 'quick wins'
- create or consolidate a partnership that is resident led.

Locally Trusted organisations were typically:

- local charity
- council for Voluntary Service.

What were Wave 2 Big Local areas planning to do with their Getting Started Funding?

The three main areas to which Big Local areas had allocated funding were workers (25 per cent of funding), events (16 per cent) and marketing and communications (12 per cent). They also allocated funds to training learning and development (eight per cent), paying for services (six per cent) and small grants (five per cent). Administration costs accounted for seven per cent of the funding allocated.

The top three areas to which funding was allocated remained the same as among Wave 1 areas but the proportion allocated to workers and events was lower among Wave 2 areas and marketing and communications budgets were slightly higher.

A total of 21 Wave 2 areas had attracted, or planned to raise, matched funding totalling £137,311, and an average of £4.487 per area. Matched funding was sourced from charities, community organisations, businesses, local authorities and housing associations.

Although every Big Local area was different and a variety of approaches to getting started were planned, they tended to adopt a similar overall model. The key components of this model are:

- **Make sure everyone knows about Big Local** – the range of proposed methods to achieving this included developing branding, a logo and promotional materials, communicating through newsletters, websites, social media and local media.
- **Make the most of your assets** – people in areas were planning to use the existing assets of local organisations, agencies and individuals primarily to promote, and engage residents and to provide information that could be built on. Sometimes, making the most of existing assets was expected to require some training of residents to ensure they had the skills and confidence to fulfil their role.
- **Reach out to residents** – to reach out to residents and get a wide range of them involved, it was common for areas' proposals to include a Big Local event. This could entail information sharing, celebration, or addressing an issue in the area and using this as a hook to engage with residents about Big Local. Areas also planned to use existing events (as a way of making the most of their existing assets) and outreach where residents could engage in word of mouth interactions to provide an effective means of communicating about Big Local. A small number of areas aimed to have a centrally located physical 'hub' where residents could drop in, find out about Big Local and share their ideas.
- **Give as many people as possible the opportunity to contribute their views** – areas planned to adopt a wide variety of methods to ensure that most residents could give their views on their area and on Big Local. They aimed to use questionnaire surveys, suggestion boxes and postcards, public meetings and video to gather a wide range of views.
- **Have a person to coordinate** – areas often saw value in having one person paid to coordinate activity and maintain momentum and planned to assign some of their funds to this role.

- **Have some quick wins** – some areas planned to have a small grants fund that voluntary and community sector groups and individuals could apply for in their area. The aim of this was to generate some tangible outcomes so residents could see the effect of Big Local in their area at an early stage. It was also often expected to be a means for engaging residents in Big Local.
- **Create or consolidate a partnership that is resident led** – the final piece of the model was for this activity to lead to the establishment of a group of residents who could form the Big Local partnership.

The areas' intentions to mobilise their assets is reflected in the types of people and organisations that they said would be delivering Getting Started activities. These included volunteer residents, locally trusted organisations, voluntary and community sector organisations, a paid worker and the local authority.

How did people in Big Local wave 2 areas plan to reach residents?

It was evident from Wave 2 areas' proposals that they had given great consideration to how to reach out to, and engage with, all residents including those who do not usually participate. Their proposed strategies entailed:

- **Making sure everything was accessible** by varying times and locations, offering events and activities that would appeal to different people having a varied mix of ways of communicating and gathering feedback and offering practical help, for example with transport, to help overcome barriers to taking part.
- **Using partners and specialists** in the public, private and voluntary and community sectors to reach out to the clients they worked with
- **Going to where people are** through door knocking, attending places residents gathered at, having a centrally located venue and using a mobile bus / van to reach people.
- **Planning to monitor and review** who they were reaching.

Who were the locally trusted organisations and what was their role?

The locally trusted organisations were similar to those in Wave 1 as the two most common types of organisations were a local charity or a Council for Voluntary Service. Other locally trusted organisations were housing associations, local authorities, other private sector and public sector organisations.

There were two main ways of selecting the locally trusted organisation:

- one organisation was proposed and agreed
- more than one organisation was nominated, or invited, followed by a selection process.

The reasons for selecting the locally trusted organisation mirrored those among Wave 1 areas and included:

- the organisation's existing experience and track record in the area
- the organisation's connections and local networks
- being known and trusted by local residents
- their financial management experience
- being located within the Big Local area
- being independent of the community.

Are Big Local areas resident-led?

To some extent the Wave 2 areas appeared to be resident-led at the point of submitting their Getting Started proposals, or were making progress towards this position. In areas that appeared to be more resident-led at this stage, residents had typically been involved in identifying and/or agreeing the locally trusted organisation, and were involved in, and in some cases leading, interim steering groups. As well as being involved in the management of Big Local, residents were often involved in delivery through outreach to other residents, as community researchers, creating or maintaining a Big Local area website, or developing a logo.

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