



PEOPLE, POWER AND PLACE

Building a lasting legacy for community organising

Nick Gardham, 12th June 2019

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LISTEN POWER ACTION

We believe in the power of listening.

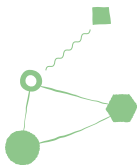
We believe in the collective
power of people.

We believe that actions of people are
powerful and can change things
for good.



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Purpose and audience

This document has been prepared by Community Organisers Limited to set out a vision for the development and growth of community organising in England.

It has been developed in consultation with members of the organisation, funders and government departments. The document aims to:

- capture the development of Community Organisers Limited as the independent body established at the end of the Community Organising Programme that ran between 2011 and 2015
- outline our ambition for community organising and how this fits in the current political and policy context
- present to funders, government departments and other bodies with a direct interest in community organising the possible future financing and resourcing of the work so that the reach and impact can be extended

What is community organising?

When communities work together, the possibilities for positive change are endless. Community organising is the work of bringing people together to take action around their common concerns and overcome social injustice. Community organisers reach out and listen, connect and motivate people to build their collective power. When people are organised, communities get heard and power begins to shift creating real change for good.



Who we are

Community Organisers Limited is the national, non-profit membership body and training organisation for people interested and involved in community organising in England.

We are a national body that is locally rooted and led by our members. Our members are taking action and inspiring thousands of people to get involved in community organising practice and join the growing movement of people up and down the country who are listening, building power and taking action to improve their neighbourhoods for good.

We are also the home for the **National Academy of Community Organising** which is a collective of locally rooted organisations (Social Action Hubs) committed to training and supporting people to develop their understanding and practice of neighbourhood community organising.

**Community
Organisers**



National Academy
of
Community Organising

Why community organising and why now?

As Julia Unwin, Chair of Civil Society Futures, shared in her recent synopsis of the Civil Society Futures report, “we are politically and socially divided”¹. This division has led to local and national third sector organisations, statutory bodies and public sector agencies seeking to respond in ways that re-engage citizens, encourage participation and build trust.

At the heart of this, is a commonly held belief from public bodies, national Government, voluntary sector organisations and citizens that need to work together collectively to rebuild a strong civil society. A civil society that is built from the ground up with strong connections between people so that there can be the necessary shift in power to make organisations genuinely accountable to the local people that they serve.

At the core of the Civil Society Futures report is the call for a new PACT² (Power, Accountability, Connection and Trust) for civil society. Community organising (as outlined in our Framework³) can deliver on all **four elements** of this PACT by:

1. Building **power** in communities ensuring that power can be shifted and shared.
2. Creating **accountable** and democratic associations of people in communities whilst also ensuring that those with power are held accountable for the decisions that they take.
3. Developing **connections** and building bridges between different people and groups by identify what people have in common.
4. Rekindling **trust** by developing strong relationships between people and institutions that are rooted in listening and dialogue.

This emerging national narrative championed by Civil Society Futures is also reinforced in policy papers by Government that demonstrate the need for community organisers, and community organising to be developed.

The Government’s Civil Society Strategy published in 2018⁴ reinforces the need for community organising in its vision for the UK. As outlined in the Ministerial forward the strategy sets out how the “the government has a vision of the UK with better connected communities ... [where] people are empowered to take responsibility for their neighbourhoods. Power is decentralised so that local officials and professionals are properly accountable to local people, and trusted to do their job without bureaucratic interference”.

In order to achieve this vision the Government has set out its aspirations to ensure that people are mobilised to play an active role in society. Community organising is the catalyst that can enable this to happen. As the strategy highlights, community organising has already inspired thousands of people to lead action in their communities up and down the country ensuring that the vision for Civil Society, as set out in the strategy, is being realised.

1 <https://youtu.be/d63OZmEv1Qg> accessed on 30 November 2018

2 <https://civilsocietyfutures.org/pact/> accessed 3 December 2018

3 <https://www.corganisers.org.uk/what-is-community-organising/our-framework/> accessed 3 December 2018

4 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-society-strategy-building-a-future-that-works-for-everyone> accessed 30 May 2019

“We know that where Community Organisers are at work, people feel a stronger sense of belonging to their neighbourhood, they feel more valued, and they become more likely to team up and improve their area.”

Civil Society Strategy, Cabinet Office (p37, August 2018)

“The Community Organising programme is based on listening and catalysing bottom-up action led by local residents...whatever people’s background, the one thing they have in common in a local area is that they all live in that place.”

Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (p45, March 2018)

“The Government should target specific community development funds to pay for community organisers...This may also include funding local voluntary organisations to undertake this work.”

The Ties that Bind: Citizenship and Civic Engagement in the 21st Century, House of Lords (p87, April 2018)

Alongside the national narrative the creation of place-based programmes such as Empowering Places (Power to Change) and Place Based Social Action (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) have contributed to the increasing number of enquiries from local organisations inviting us in to areas to develop community organising training and practice. These organisations, geographically spread across the country (e.g. Hastings, Exeter, Halifax, Coventry, Blackpool, Grimsby and Leeds) see the power of community organising to strengthen the work that they are doing by bringing new people together, creating new connections and mobilising people to work together to develop and lead on social action.

As well as the interest from local voluntary sector organisations we are seeing an increase in the willingness from local government to engage with community organising. This includes councils engaging with us to explore how a community organising approach can be developed by officers (Bristol City Council and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea) as well as how the councils can facilitate the community organising process through the creation of, and working with, social action hubs within a given area (West Sussex Council, Staffordshire County Council and the Greater London Authority).

We have also developed a strategic relationship with the National Association of Local Councils to explore how community organising can strengthen local democracy by working with existing town and parish councils as well as the creation of new councils. This relationship has already been developed in Wiltshire and Somerset with increasing interest from Derbyshire, Suffolk, Herefordshire, Warwickshire and Cambridgeshire.

It is clear from the emerging national narrative, development of place based programmes, and increasing interest from local organisations and public bodies that community organising is needed to:

- a. Deliver the strategic policy objectives of national government.
- b. Meet the needs of local people and organisations so that they can bring about the changes that collectively they want to see.
- c. Provide a framework and set of tools, guidance and skills which can be used to enable people to move from vision to practical reality in terms of the work to rebuild a strong civil society.

How we operate

Community Organisers is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales and a registered charity (No. 1183487). We are a membership body comprising over 1,200 individual members from across England (primarily from those “left behind” communities) and 28 organisation members. The Board of seven Directors is wholly elected from the membership with three places reserved on the Board for co-opted Directors with specialist expertise or skills.

As a national body we have a small core staff team of nine individuals and wider network of over 40 Associate Trainers. The staff team both oversees the organisation and development of the national membership body as well as provides the administrative function and quality assurance for the National Academy of Community Organising. The National Academy is made up of 20 organisations across England who provide our quality assured training courses and qualifications. Each of these organisations are independent local bodies which are both supported through grants that we disperse to them but also through their own independently raised finance to support community organising activity.

We have developed our credibility as a national body with expertise in community organising influencing the thinking and programmes of organisations through our work and training such as; Government departments (including the Home Office, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government), National Democracy Week developed by the Cabinet Office, National Association of Local Councils, Power to Change, the Co-operative Member Pioneers, various local authorities, The National Lottery Community Fund, Socially Revitalised (a project in Poland in partnership with the British Council to support the community organising approach to be developed in two major cities), Neighbourhood Watch, KeyRing (supported living charity), housing associations (Sanctuary Housing) and many locally rooted organisations and bodies who have worked directly with our network of members.

We are also a delivery partner for the Innovation and Skills for Social Change undergraduate degree course delivered at Leeds Beckett University.

“Community organisers could be effective in delivering community led solutions and particularly helpful in ensuring bodies with statutory obligations (e.g. housing associations) work together to deliver effectively for residents”

Letter to Community Organisers from James Brokenshire, Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government

Why we exist

We exist to:

- Support people and organisations to develop their understanding, practice and skills of community organising through training and education.
- Inspire people to take action on the issues that matter most to them.
- Connect the thousands of people up and down the country who are working to improve their neighbourhoods for good.

By supporting our members to develop their understanding and practice of community organising we have enabled them to listen to tens of thousands of people across England in some of the most economically deprived and ‘left behind’ neighbourhoods. Through these many conversations we have heard stories of resilience, strength and the power of people coming together. Despite the self-organisation of people we have

also heard of the powerlessness that people feel without support to address the challenges that they are facing. Evidence from our work on the ground shows that these challenges can only be tackled by people working together and we are inspiring people to come together and take action; whether that is developing a community led initiative to tackle isolation and loneliness, campaigning for better housing conditions, creating more accountable local institutions or challenging politicians to deliver on their promises.

We believe that by encouraging people to work together on the issues that they care most about, they will develop personal agency leading to better well-being, strengthen democracy and encourage community life and commitment to others. This is what the Government's Civil Society Strategy highlights as making a stronger civil society.

What do we know already?

We know that:

- Community organising encourages and facilitates the participation of powerful groups of people who work together on tackling the issues they care most about to achieve stronger and more just communities.
- Social Action Hubs are trusted, connected and locally rooted organisations that are able to mobilise, galvanise and support those most excluded from power and decision making.
- To ensure success there needs to be a combination of formal training, informal peer learning, mentoring and practice which develops the effectiveness of individual community organisers, leaders and our members.

Methodology

Since 2011 we have developed our community organising practice through supporting, involving and training thousands of people in community organising up and down the country.

Our approach to community organising is primarily a neighbourhood-based approach, which begins with knocking on doors and listening deeply to the concerns, motivations and aspirations of people about their lives and communities. However, from within our network, the approach can also be applied in other settings, for example within communities-of-interest – such as private renters (ACORN, Bristol), a migrant community (English for Action, London) or young people (Community Roots CIC, Gloucester), where listening might take place in other settings such as schools, high streets or community centres.

“The approach was able to develop confidence and skills in individuals, and to encourage them to take action in their community”

Ipsos Mori & NEF, Evaluation of the CO Programme – 2015

“Significant social value was also created through the listenings and projects”

Ipsos Mori & NEF, Evaluation of the CO Programme – 2015

The aim is the same in all cases: to bring together people with shared interests, facilitate them to develop their confidence and sense of collective power, identify common goals and develop a strategy to achieve them – and motivate them to act together to achieve their goals and build their power. This social action may be something they can achieve themselves through working together or it may involve campaigning for a change of policy or law.

As well as developing our approach to community organising we have also built a network of Social Action Hubs. The Hubs are locally rooted organisations who are committed to training and supporting people to develop their understanding and practice of community organising.

Impact

We have seen the impact of this approach. The Ipsos Mori and New Economics Foundation evaluation of the Community Organisers Programme (2011 – 2015) highlighted both the impact of having a dedicated community organising resource in a community, and of community organising as an approach in and of itself.

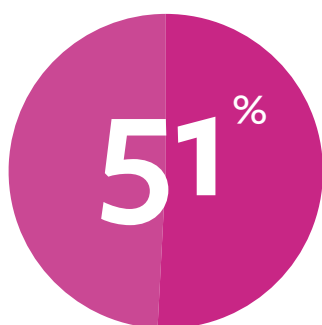
“[The approach] engaged a huge range of people. This included individuals who were isolated or lacked confidence about getting involved ... those who were already leaders in their community; people who were passionate about a particular issue; and those who were interested in seeing broad community change in their area”

Ipsos Mori & NEF, Evaluation of the CO Programme – 2015

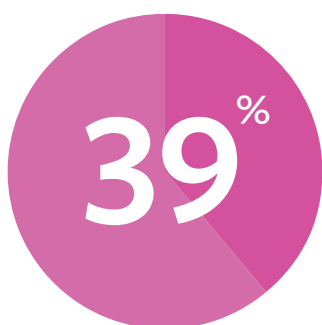
In addition to this, data from the Community Life Survey 2014 shows that where people involved with community organising are active they are more likely to pull together to improve their neighbourhood and have a greater sense of belonging. In addition, It also highlighted that people living in those areas were more inclined to take action to influence decisions on issues. Examples given included:

- 44% of people were likely to organise a paper petition compared to 37%
- 9% would organise a group, compared to 4%
- 14% would contact local media or journalists compared to 8%

Agree that local people pull together to improve the neighbourhood

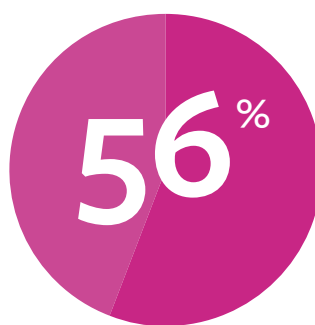


Community
organiser areas

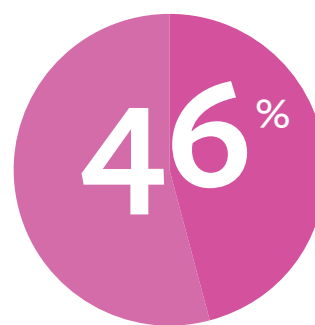


Comparable non-community
organiser areas

Agree that they have a strong sense of belonging to their neighbourhood



Community
organiser areas



Comparable non-community
organiser areas

Since April 2017, through the Community Organisers Expansion Programme, we have trained 2500 people in community organising courses through 20 Social Action Hubs and other partners. The Social Action Hubs have developed their capacity to provide quality assured community organising training as well as continuing to lead community organising work. The training ranges from one-day quality assured courses to courses leading to the national Qualifications in community organising, as well as informal and ‘in-the-field’ learning opportunities.

Examples of impact

Training people with learning disabilities in North Birkenhead in community organising so that they could develop their own voice to inform and influence the decisions that affect them as well as leading on their own projects and activities

Case study : tiny.cc/mencap

Supporting over 100 ESOL learners to come together at City Hall, London to celebrate the diversity of the capital city whilst also ensuring their demands for continued support for ESOL teaching was heard by the Deputy Mayor of London ahead of planned changes to Adult Education budgets

Case study : tiny.cc/esol_action

Building a community union of over 200 private renters in Newcastle and providing them with training in community organising to strengthen their actions ensuring that they could take collective action to improve the housing conditions within a tower block

Case study : tiny.cc/renters_union

As well as seeing the impact of the community organising, we have also seen the impact of being a Social Action Hub on the staff and volunteers of these organisations.

Work carried out by our internal learning partner, Imagine, found that the programme has given new momentum to the Hubs, even where they were already working with local communities using a community-based approach.

Hubs have demonstrated that the adoption of community organising has:

- Increased confidence, skills and energy levels of local people that has led to raised aspirations.
- Raised the profile of the organisation and enabled them to reach out to other organisations, building local relationships and scope for collaboration.
- Embedded community organising into the culture and processes of the organisation, raising awareness and helping clarify vision.
- Generated the capacity to develop training and skills which makes the organisation a significant resource locally.
- Provided training and good practice guidance to other staff.
- Supported new trainees to take action for social change.
- Helped to stabilise funding and find new resources.

We will build on this.

Key achievements in 2018/19:

Collectively Social Action Hubs have:

- Trained 819 people in community organising
- Listened on average to 900 people per month
- Supported 700 people to be involved with community organising at a neighbourhood level
- Supported the growth of Community Organisers membership by almost 1000 people
- Encouraged over 600 people to access and participate in the online membership community
- Raised over £750,000 to support community organising and training at a local level

Social Action Hubs generated a range of income to support community organising, for example:

- £1,000 per month from membership dues to Acorn Bristol.
- £100,000 over two years for two community organisers to work with migrant communities at Selby Trust.
- A community organiser post funded through the sale of coffee in The Windmill Coffee Shop, Stockport – matched with Lottery money.

Social Action Hubs supported action for change on a wide range of issues including:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • ESOL provision | • Welcoming refugees |
| • Local democracy | • Car parking charges |
| • Health and wellbeing | • Bus services |
| • Isolation | • Housing conditions and tenants' rights |
| • Domestic violence | • Food poverty and access including holiday hunger |
| • Cost of funerals | • Play provision for children |
| • Employment opportunities | • Quality of public parks and open spaces |
| • Youth violence and young people's mental health | • Water charges |

Our vision for the future

We want to see a future where community organising underpins a vibrant democracy and is sparking a diversity of local conversations in the most “left behind” and socio-economically deprived communities. These conversations will inspire people to take action on what they care about, develop projects or initiatives that meet local aspirations and build a powerful voice that can shape the policies and decisions that affect their lives.

The actions that people take will contribute to building a strong civil society which starts to bring together people and organisations from diverse and dispersed backgrounds to rebuild the trust that has been eroded in our society. As people and organisations start to work together on the matters affecting them at a neighbourhood level, we seek to support a shift in power so that it is shared between organisations and institutions and the people that they serve to create genuine accountability.

How will we achieve this?

To achieve this, we want to give more people access to the tools of community organising in more areas by expanding **our existing network of Social Action Hubs to 50 by 2026**. Social Action Hubs are our key drivers for change at a neighbourhood level, using community organising as the means to achieve this. Hubs embody the principles of: people, power and place and locally are the catalyst for people to come together if they want to create change in their neighbourhoods. By expanding to 50 Social Action Hubs we are able to increase our geographic spread ensuring that we extend the reach and depth of the community organising network across England.

We will do this by building on what already exists, working with existing locally rooted and accountable organisations with a track record of listening and supporting local people to make change using community organising. Where there is interest in an area but not an existing suitable organisation, we will invest in that area by facilitating an organising process, out of which a new Social Action Hub can be developed. We will draw on the expertise of the current Social Action Hubs to support and mentor new hubs.

The concept of a Social Action Hub for us is about building power within local communities in three ways: through personal development – empowering individuals; through campaigning – working on issues; and through organising to gain recognition and become more effective at a strategic level.

Grace English, High Trees Community Development Trust





What approach would we take?

We know that the best approach to develop community organising in an area requires a combination of: community organising work on the ground, formal quality assured education and training of staff, volunteers, leaders and members, mentoring of new community organisers and informal peer support.

Using the following approaches, we will seek to ensure that resources are in place to support each element so that a successful community organising process and legacy can be achieved. It is vital that we embed community organising locally so that the approach continues beyond the lifetime of any programme, but equally vital that there is a national body which is able to continue to quality assure and maintain the standards and the knowledge base of community organising and community organisers, share best practice and enable the work to seed in new areas.

“In short [community] organising is a craft that must be learned, and this requires a long-term investment in training, mentorship and living wage salaries for the organising profession”

Making a way forward, 2019 – published by Ariadne Network

Approach A

In areas where community organising is established / establishing

We would work with the existing community organising team at an organisation or within a cluster of organisations to develop their capacity to train local people and organisations in community organising. We would do this by connecting them with an existing Social Action Hub to provide peer mentoring whilst also providing a formal programme of training and support to the team.

Approach B

In areas where community organising does not have a presence

We would appoint a community organiser to work with an organisation or a cluster of organisations over a period of three years. They would start by leading a listening campaign in the community to build a network of locally supportive organisations for community organising. This would build the base for the formal training and support as well as the peer mentoring that would take place in Year 2 onwards.

What impact will it have?

From what we have learned so far from the impact of the original Community Organisers Programme (2011 – 2015) evidenced in the evaluation conducted by Ipsos Mori and NEF (2015) and the Community Life Survey (2014), and our current Programme activity and outputs we can see the impact that community organising has on individuals, groups and wider communities.

“Positive community engagement is as critical as robust law enforcement activity – helping to build trust and cooperation.”

Rt Hon Theresa May MP, Prime Minister – Letter to participants of the Serious Youth Violence Summit (2019)

It is clear that as a direct result of developing community organising at a neighbourhood level, supporting that ongoing activity, and building the capacity of local organisations to train and support local people in community organising people feel more empowered at a neighbourhood level and are able to take action on the issues that matter most to them.

Impact in numbers:

Based on our current impact data of the 20 Social Action Hubs, building a network of 50 Social Action Hubs would result in:

2,000

people being trained in community organising each year

Over

20,000

per year, being engaged 1 to 1

1,750

people would be mobilised each year to take action in their communities

Over

4,000

hours, per year, would be spent by Social Action Hubs directly supporting people with community organising

1,100

would join the membership infrastructure of Community Organisers, per year, to access peer learning opportunities and Local Organising Groups

Up to

£1.57 m

would be leveraged, per year, to support and strengthen communities through community organising activities

Impact - stories of change

Personal Stories



Simon's story



Former drug addict and dealer Simon is a trainee community organiser working in Stafford. Using his experiences of life on the street, Simon has spent time listening to the local homeless community and supporting them to act on the issues that directly affect them, including access to food and accommodation.

Simon was drawn to community organising because of its focus on building collective power in communities; engaging in this process has helped him build his personal power.

He said: "As a community organiser, you become empowered by the people that you empower. I do see myself as a leader in the community now, but you lead by serving. I used to be a 'rebel without a cause' – now I have a cause!"



Sheila's story



Injustice between the local parish council and allotment association prompted Sheila, who suffers from severe cerebrovascular disease, to get more involved with her local community. After meeting with Community Organisers and learning about the movement, Sheila and other community members formed a community-led group and started working with the parish council constructively, listening to local people and bringing them together to create a community-led action plan.

Sheila eventually realised that her health problems had ceased to dominate her life. Her quality of life and sense of self-worth had vastly improved.

Sheila said: "Community organising had given me back a sense of purpose and given me back my sense of self. The disease that stole my confidence and sense of worth has now been relegated to little more than something I need to learn to live with. I believe that community organising has saved my life."

Local stories of change

Hartlepool Holiday Action



Attending a one-day Introduction to Community Organising training course prompted a group of people in Dyke House, Hartlepool, to take action over a lack of summer holiday activities for families in the local area.

Working with Community Organiser Nikki, the group listened to local people and parents and identified arts and craft sessions and group trips for families as a way forward. Affordability was also an issue for parents as Dyke House is one of the most deprived areas of the UK with high unemployment.

The community worked together to secure funding from local organisations and mobilise volunteers to take action. Over the summer, they collectively managed to provide 1,600 meals for local people, organise trips for 500 people and put on a programme of regular activities including arts and crafts and cookery clubs for families in the area.

The group has grown and continues to take ownership of projects as they develop their own personal and collective power. Nikki said: “Community members have organised Christmas activities, a trip to Roker lights, an event with mascots and local singers. They did all of that themselves, they just got on and did it.”

Parkgate community lights the way with lantern walk



The Green Hill beauty spot was under threat from anti-social behaviour, litter, fly-tipping, and even the threat of excavation from a local road resurfacing company. Some local people had already started a petition to save the site when Sarah, the local Community Organiser, started listening in the area.

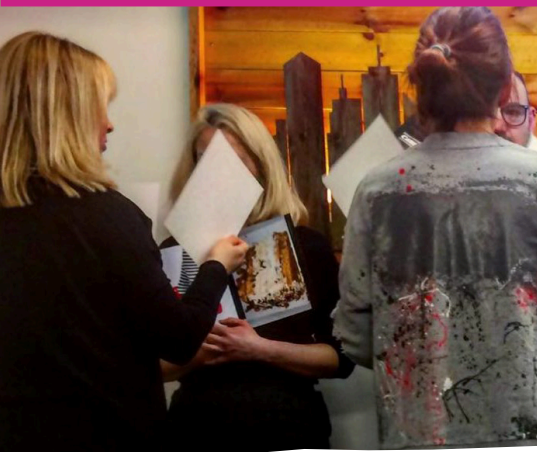
Seven community members came forward with an idea to create a community event and joined forces with other local groups to plan a winter lantern walk through Green Hill, bringing the community together to appreciate the area and raise awareness about the issues. The small coalition reached out into the wider community, inviting local people, groups, organisations and businesses to get involved. They held lantern making workshops at a local community hub, which brought together a diverse group of people from around Rawmarsh and Parkgate. The event itself attracted around 85 people but, more importantly, brought the community together to connect around their common love of Green Hill and demonstrate its role as an important community asset.

The road surfacing company has abandoned its plans for now, but the community organising around the lantern walk and future events is paving the way for a more powerful community, which is combatting the ongoing anti-social behaviour and fending off any future excavation plans through collective positive action.

Impact on organisations



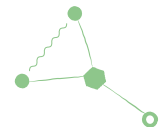
**“Don’t look back
unless it’s to see how
far you’ve come”
Spider Project, North
Birkenhead**



The Spider Project is a creative arts and well-being organisation that works with people who are in recovery from drug and alcohol problems. They invited their local community organiser to lead a one-day workshop to train members in the process of community organising.

Throughout the day, the group uncovered some issues they could act on straight away. They discussed that Spider Project members didn’t feel they really have a say in what goes on, or the ability to influence the organisation in a meaningful way.

As a direct result of the training, the group created a social action team that spent time listening to other members and service users. This group now has greater power and control in the decision making of the organisation, including having a direct say over what their recovery looks like. The Spider Project was on board with the process from the start and, as a result, has increased its retention rates for service users meaning that people are now supported in their recovery for longer.



Impact on thematic area

Health



Community Organiser Nicola Wallace Dean from the Starting Point social action hub has been championing a community organising approach to social prescribing to improve the wellbeing of people living in Woodley, Stockport. By training and working with patient champions at the local Alvanley Family GP Practice, they have listened to local people and patients to find out what they care about and helped them find their own solutions to health and wellbeing.

The outcome is the creation of a ‘Wellbeing Prescription’ that is made up of locally led activities, including a singing group, ‘chatter and natter table’ and gardening for health project. Because local people own the Wellbeing Prescription, there is no need for a paid practice staff member to get involved.

Kay Ellermeyer, the Practice Manager, reports that the outcome of this collaboration has seen a 20% reduction in the use of the GP surgery.



Tackling isolation and loneliness



Age Friendly Nottingham



The Age Friendly Nottinghamshire project, supported by Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottinghamshire Together, has used community organising to support residents to stay active mentally, physically and socially and to be more neighbourly.

Using community organising to reach out, listen and connect with local residents on the things that matter most to them, and by delivering training to local resident groups, in two months the project has connected with over 220 local people and supported 28 local community events with almost 1,000 people in attendance.

One major project that emerged was led by Gina Harbottle, who suffers from a neurological condition that affects her mobility. Gina got involved with the project's community organising team and, after listening to residents at an independent living complex, realised that people needed to find a way to connect with each other and tackle isolation. Through listening in the wider community, Gina and the project team have been able to bring groups together, get involved in new activities and build confidence amongst those people who may otherwise have slipped through the net.

Policing



Nottinghamshire police force worked with community organisers as part of their campaign for crime prevention and early intervention.

The force hired a senior community organiser who helped them look for new ways of engaging with disaffected communities in the area. The community organiser ensured that residents are better connected, helped with early intervention by identifying 'behind closed door' issues, supported communities to take joint ownership of local problems and helped build the sustainability of local economies.

The community organiser listened widely on the doorstep to the issues that mattered to residents. They helped train and co-ordinate local volunteers in order to build their skills and confidence, as well as helping communities implement project ideas. They also worked with the police Prevent project team, providing advice on maintaining trust and relationships with local communities.

Lessons learned from the partnership:

- Community organisers can help reveal the underlying causes of many problems – leading to a focus on prevention, rather than acute response.
- Hiring community organisers provides local government with a way of harnessing expertise; however, community organisers must maintain their independence.
- When embedded in communities, community organisers can provide key knowledge that enables local government to tailor policies for specific areas.



How the network of Social Action Hubs works to maximise impact:

Sharing Best Practice

Social Action Hub Starting Point CLP in Stockport became involved in developing a Social Prescribing Programme with Alvaney GP Practice. This experience was shared via a webinar, a video and a blog. This has led to other Social Action Hubs seeing the potential for linking community organising and social prescribing. Community organising training for social prescribers is now under way on the Wirral.

Tackling Loneliness and Isolation

A number of Social Action Hubs are involved in initiatives to tackle loneliness and isolation. The process of knocking on doors, listening and connecting people together has a profound impact on loneliness. This has led to Macmillan Cancer Care bringing community organising to address the development of care networks for people affected by cancer in Wiltshire. In Berkshire, we have begun providing training for a Rural Community Council to help them develop a strategy to tackle isolation. In Nottingham, network members have begun new befriending groups. Our newest Social Action Hub in Coventry is using community organising to tackle loneliness in a three-year programme funded by Public Health. We have the ability to network these organisations to share best practice and learn from each other.

Joining forces to support migrant communities

In London, all of the Social Action Hubs are involved in work to enable people from migrant communities to better integrate through learning and applying community organising skills which enhance their ability to participate in democratic life and have a voice. Social Action Hub Selby Trust has just won £100k of funding to train migrant groups and communities in community organising. Social Action Hub English for Action has adapted the Introduction to Community Organising course for ESOL learners and is starting to share that course with other Hubs to deliver.



The sustainability challenge

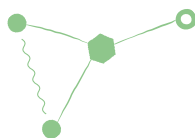
Sustaining community organising is a challenge, but not an impossible one that cannot be overcome. We see other national organisations and networks that share sustainability challenges and have overcome them such as The School for Social Entrepreneurs, Local Trust, Locality and UnLtd. We have spoken to them and learnt from their models. Both Local Trust and UnLtd benefit from a significant endowment and The School for Social Entrepreneurs operates a social franchise model as well as receiving financial support from large corporates. Locality's peer membership network is subsidised through central government contracts.

The availability of resources in the wider market to support community organising is still underdeveloped. Although we are seeing increasing interest from funders and other bodies who are developing a growing interest in community organising approaches as a way of unlocking the potential of those neighbourhoods where people are most excluded from power and decision making. The recent report from Ariadne (a network of over 550 funders from across Europe) argued that whilst, "it might not seem like the quickest route to impact ... many of the donors who have started on this journey see it as a key piece of the funding armament that can bring about longer lasting and deeper change".

We believe that we can unlock this market to attract the necessary external investment and support but we know that this will take time.

"It's costly not to invest in community organising. Look at Grenfell Tower in London ... their complaints went out the window, the community wasn't united enough. Bringing people together allows stronger collective bargaining power"

Renata Cuk
Open Society Initiative For Europe



As the Ipsos Mori and NEF Evaluation in 2015 makes clear, “many local communities are not sufficiently organised and this prevents them from improving their neighbourhoods and tackling problems”. Therefore, community organising must focus on these neighbourhoods. But, the communities that need community organising the most are often without the financial resources to build their own capacity and attract the resources to effect change for themselves. Therefore, they are reliant on external investment and support. To build capacity takes time.

As highlighted, from the current financial support from Government, we are already seeing how organisations are bringing in money to support community organising. In areas such as Wiltshire (Community First have leveraged over £100k of investment) London (High Trees have generated income from the GLA to support the work of community organisers matching the Social Action Hub Grant) and Rotherham (where The National Lottery Community Fund have invested over £500k to expand community organising). This combination of central government investment and locally raised funds is sustaining community organising at a neighbourhood level.

Our approach to developing the Social Action Hub model through our interdependent infrastructure underpins our business plan for the development of Quality Assured training and delivery of national qualifications. Learning from the model developed by The School for Social Entrepreneurs, we have seen that resources secured centrally enable organisations to unlock money at a local level. This income leveraged locally will enable Social Action Hubs to pay to be part of the National Academy of Community Organising. We are seeing evidence of this with Hubs raising their own income from the delivery of training courses and programmes. Equally, organisations have chosen to become Social Action Hubs and are using their own grants to pay to be part of the National Academy of Community Organising.



Future financial options for sustaining community organising

We have developed four possible scenarios for the future of community organising. In each of these we have outlined the grant funding or investment required to support each scenario and the impact in each instance. A detailed breakdown of the financial projections can be found on pages 24 to 32 for each option.

The income projections in each scenario are based on our experiences over the last four years. A detailed breakdown of our income can be found on page 33.

Option A:

No further financial support for Social Action Hubs

This operating model assumes that there are no further grants to support Social Action Hubs so the reduction from 20 Social Action Hubs to 14 is due to the current availability of resources in the wider market to support community organising locally in the absence of any central government funding that can be used as leverage.

Based on this information we project that we will be able to steadily continue to support the growth and development of community organising. The table below shows the anticipated levels of impact that we envisage.

Funding / Investment required over 5 years:	£390,000* (See page 24 for cost breakdown)
Key Impact data over 5 years:	1,140 people trained
	627 new members
	13,680 reached and engaged

Option B:

Maintaining the current infrastructure and activity levels as a result of the Community Organisers Expansion Programme over a five-year period

This option will maintain the current operational activity of the organisation ensuring a steady growth in the numbers of people active across the community organising network. It would continue to strengthen the existing Social Action Hubs ensuring further reach across the areas that they serve and an opportunity to reach out to new partners at a local level.

Funding / Investment required over 5 years:	£3,122,067* (See page 27 for cost breakdown)
Key Impact data over 5 years:	4,000 people trained
	2,220 new members
	41,000 reached and engaged
	£3,745,000 income leveraged locally against the SAH Grants to support community organising activity

Option C:

Expand Social Action Hubs to 50 over a five-year period

Using the current Programme approach, we would scale to 50 Social Action Hubs over a five-year period. This option provides the resources for continued development and oversight of quality assured training and trainers in order to safeguard the quality and effectiveness of community organising work in communities.

Each Social Action Hub would be provided with a grant of £57,000 over a three-year period as a development grant. The grant itself would provide resource for a combination of training, mentoring, and community organising work on the ground as well as providing the necessary funds to build their capacity as a Social Action Hub. There is an expectation that Social Action Hubs would leverage funding to support their community organising work on the ground to unlock this grant. This leveraged income would be used to support their Social Action Hub fee.

Social Action Hubs from the previous Programme and those that complete their funded three year period as part of the five-year plan would receive a grant of £8,200 as an ongoing support grant. This money would be used to unlock resources locally and ensure that they can contribute their skills and experience to the growing network of Social Action Hubs.

Funding / Investment required over 5 years:	£3,846,685* (See page 29 for cost breakdown)
Key Impact data over 5 years:	8,800 people trained
	4,840 new members
	90,200 reached and engaged
	£5,940,640 income leveraged locally against the SAH Grants to support community organising activity

Option D:

Develop 50 hubs over 5 years and then sustain activity for a further 5 years - Spend down endowment

To accelerate the growth of community organising we are proposing that a consortium of funders including government create a 10 year spend down endowment. We believe that this would enable the organisation to undertake a piece of work of national significance and seize the opportunity that is currently presented by the demand in the market for community organising.

This spend down endowment would significantly increase the reach and scale of community organising enabling the work to be developed and sustained across 50 areas of England.

Funding / Investment required over 5 years:	£6,017,192* (See page 31 for cost breakdown)
Key Impact data over 5 years:	18,800 people trained
	12,340 new members
	192,700 reached and engaged
	£10,801,200 income leveraged locally against the SAH Grants to support community organising activity

Option A: No further financial support for Social Action Hubs

Income	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Training and Consultancy	60,000	69,000	79,350	91,253	104,940
Membership (Event fees and donations)	10,000	11,000	12,000	13,000	14,000
National Academy of Community Organising – SAH & Certification Fees	37,065	37,065	40,650	44,235	47,610
Investment income	7,200	7,272	7,345	7,418	7,492
Trusts, foundations and government	60,000	60,000	80,000	90,000	100,000
Total	174,265	184,337	219,345	245,906	274,042
Expenditure					
Core Operational Activity (Includes Training & Consultancy delivery)	130,000	137,100	145,017	153,869	163,790
National Academy of Community Organising	32,000	32,640	33,293	33,959	34,638
Membership	64,000	65,280	66,586	67,917	69,276
Total	226,000	235,020	244,895	255,745	267,703
Net Costs	-51,735	-50,683	-25,550	-9,839	6,339

***Total Funding /
Investment required
£390,000**

Shortfall in financial years 1-4 would be drawn from the Charity's reserves

Option A: Key impact data per year

Impact data	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Totals
Number of Hubs	14	14	15	16	17	
Number of People Trained	210	210	225	240	255	1,140
Number of People Engaged	2,520	2,520	2,700	2,880	3,060	13,680
Membership	116	116	124	132	140	627



Accelerating growth and impact

We believe that now is the opportunity to scale community organising. We believe that the current policy landscape, growth in social action and the increasing demand that we are seeing from a wider range of people and organisations shows us that if we seize this opportunity we can develop a programme of work of national significance.

By seizing this opportunity and meeting the increasing demand we can increase the current scale and activity of Community Organisers to strengthen grassroots community organising activity, and continue to support the national infrastructure.

As a national network that is locally rooted in order for community organising to grow its impact and for a national network for community organising to flourish requires either:

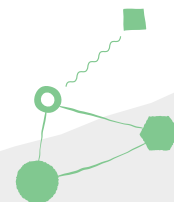
1. Community organising properly resourced at a neighbourhood level in order for local Hubs to buy in the services of a national quality assurance and support body;

or

2. The national body to be resourced so that community organising can be promoted, training and practice quality assured, and Social Action Hubs networked together, leaving funds to be leveraged locally to support community organising in neighbourhoods and communities.

We believe that for one single organisation or funder to achieve point 1 is unrealisable as it would require significant resources made available nationally. In addition to this, we feel that this would undermine the principles of community organising of ensuring the work is locally rooted and owned.

Therefore, we have developed three options to finance both the current infrastructure and its levels of impact and the expansion and scale of community organising through the creation of 50 Social Action Hubs. Our preferred option, which we believe both meets the market demand for community organising as well as developing a piece of work which would have national significance is Option D.



Option B: Maintaining the current infrastructure and activity levels as a result of the Community Organisers Expansion Programme over a five-year period

Income	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Training and Consultancy	60,000	69,000	79,350	91,253	104,940
Membership (Event fees and donations)	10,000	13,000	16,000	19,000	22,000
National Academy of Community Organising – SAH & Certification Fees	63,750	65,025	66,326	67,652	69,005
Investment income	7,200	7,272	7,345	7,418	7,492
Social Action Hub (Grants)	350,000	350,000	350,000	350,000	350,000
Trusts, foundations and government	272,750	274,107	274,982	275,291	274,937
Total	763,700	778,404	794,003	810,614	828,374

***Total Funding /
Investment required
£3,122,067**

Expenditure					
Core Operational Activity (Includes Training & Consultancy delivery)	247,000	256,440	266,744	278,030	290,434
National Academy of Community Organising	75,700	77,214	78,758	80,333	81,940
Membership	91,000	94,750	98,500	102,250	106,000
Social Action Hub (Grants)	350,000	350,000	350,000	350,000	350,000
Total	763,700	778,404	794,002	810,613	828,375

This option will maintain the current operational activity of the organisation ensuring a steady growth in the numbers of people active across the community organising network. It would continue to strengthen the existing Social Action Hubs ensuring further reach across the areas that they serve and an opportunity to connect with new partners at a local level.

Option B: Key impact data per year

Impact data	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Totals
Number of Hubs	20	20	20	20	20	
Number of People Trained pa	800	800	800	800	800	4,000
Number of People Engaged pa	8,200	8,200	8,200	8,200	8,200	41,000
Membership	440	440	440	440	440	2,200
Income leveraged	£749,000	£749,000	£749,000	£749,000	£749,000	£3,745,000



Option C: Expand Social Action Hubs to 50 over a five year period

Income	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Training and Consultancy	60,000	69,000	79,350	91,253	104,940
Membership (Event fees and donations)	22,158	29,488	38,651	47,814	56,977
National Academy of Community Organising	111,500	145,250	167,375	167,375	167,375
Investment income	7,200	7,272	7,345	7,418	7,492
Social Action Hub (Start Up Grants)	190,000	380,000	570,000	380,000	190,000
Social Action Hub (Support / Mentoring Grants)	164,000	164,000	164,000	246,000	328,000
Trusts, foundations and government	216,042	219,130	218,163	212,060	205,290
Total	770,900	1,014,140	1,244,884	1,151,920	1,060,074

***Total Funding /
Investment required
£3,846,685**

Expenditure					
Core Operational Activity (includes Training & Consultancy Delivery Costs)	247,000	256,440	266,744	278,030	290,434
National Academy of Community Organising	78,900	118,950	145,640	145,640	145,640
Membership	91,000	94,750	98,500	102,250	106,000
Social Action Hub (Grants)	354,000	544,000	734,000	626,000	518,000
Total	770,900	1,014,140	1,244,884	1,151,920	1,060,074

Using the CO Expansion Programme approach, we would scale to 50 Social Action Hubs over a five-year period. This option provides the resources for continued development and oversight of quality assured training and trainers in order to safeguard the quality and effectiveness of community organising work in communities and neighbourhoods.

Each Social Action Hub would be provided with a grant of £57,000 over a three-year period. The grant itself would provide resource for a combination of training, mentoring, and community organising work on the ground. There is an expectation that Social Action Hubs would leverage funding to support their community organising work on the ground to unlock this grant. This leveraged income would be used to support their Social Action Hub fee.

Option C: Key impact data per year

Impact data	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Totals
Number of Hubs	30	40	50	50	50	
Number of People Trained pa	1,200	1,600	2,000	2,000	2,000	8,800
Number of People Engaged pa	12,300	16,400	20,500	20,500	20,500	90,200
Membership	660	880	1,100	1,100	1,100	4,840
Income leveraged	£757,560	£1,164,160	£1,570,760	£1,339,640	£1,108,520	£5,940,640



Option D: Develop 50 hubs over 5 years and then sustain activity for a further 5 years - Spend down endowment

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Income										
Training & Consultancy	60,000	69,000	79,350	91,253	104,940	107,039	109,180	111,363	113,590	115,862
Memberships Fees and Donations	13,300	17,700	23,200	28,700	34,200	39,700	45,200	50,700	56,200	61,700
National Academy of Community Organising (SAH Fees)	94,800	115,400	136,000	151,000	166,000	154,750	154,750	154,750	154,750	154,750
Investment income	6,017,192*	34,658	34,761	31,161	27,293	23,764	20,752	18,216	15,676	13,133
Grants from trusts and foundations	50,000	65,000	80,000	95,000	110,000	115,000	120,000	125,000	130,000	135,000
Total	6,235,292	301,758	353,311	397,114	442,433	440,253	449,882	460,029	470,217	480,445
Expenditure										
Core Operational Activity (Includes delivery of Training & Consultancy costs)	247,000	256,440	266,744	278,030	290,434	297,292	304,309	311,487	318,830	326,342
National Academy of Community Organising	66,000	81,216	96,444	111,672	145,640	145,640	145,640	145,640	145,640	145,640
Membership	91,000	94,750	98,500	102,250	106,000	109,655	113,500	117,250	121,000	124,750
Social Action Hub (Start Up Grants)	190,000	380,000	570,000	380,000	190,000	0	0	0	0	0
Social Action Hub (Support / Mentoring Grants)	164,000	164,000	164,000	246,000	328,000	410,000	410,000	410,000	410,000	410,000
Fund Balance Carried Forward	5,477,292	4,802,644	3,960,268	3,239,430	2,621,789	2,099,455	1,575,888	1,051,541	526,288	0

***Total Funding / Investment required
£6,017,192**

Option D: Key impact data per year

Impact data	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	Totals
Number of Hubs	30	40	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	
Number of People Trained pa	1,200	1,600	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	18,800
Number of People Engaged pa	12,300	16,400	20,500	20,500	20,500	20,500	20,500	20,500	20,500	20,500	192,700
Membership	660	880	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100	10,340
Money leveraged locally	£757,560	£1,164,160	£1,570,760	£1,339,640	£1,108,520	£877,400	£877,400	£877,400	£877,400	£877,400	£10,327,640



Financial history and track record

Community Organisers was established at the end of the national Community Organiser Programme (2011 - 2015) to support those community organisers trained under the programme and to support the growing movement of community organising in England.

Financial year	Funder	Investment / funds
2015/16	Locality - Legacy funds – National Community Organiser Programme	£60,000
	Community Development Foundation - Training and support for Community First areas	£30,000
	Cabinet Office / DCLG – Community Organisers Mobilisation Fund	£580,000 (of which £500k of grant monies to be dispersed)
2016/2017	Social Investment Business – Financial support to assist with organisational development as part of Big Potential Advanced	£61,680
	Power to Change – Support to build a network of community businesses who could provide training and support in community organising	£52,722
	Philanthropic Development Loan – support with core operational costs and activity	£22,000
	National Community Organisers' Meet Up – Ticket sales and contributions from membership	£10,000
	Consultancy fees and fees from trading – delivery of consultancy and training courses	£12,284
	Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport – Delivery of the Community Organisers Expansion Programme between 2017 and 2020 (Total contract value £4,189,074 (of which £1,411,250 of grant monies to be dispersed)	£307,500 and £292,500 distributed grant monies

Financial year	Funder	Investment / funds
2017/2018	Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport – Delivery of the Community Organisers Expansion Programme	£750,000 and £450,00 distributed grant monies
	National Community Organisers' Meet Up – Ticket sales and contributions from membership	£10,000
	Consultancy fees and fees from trading – delivery of consultancy and training courses	£6,041
2018/2019	Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport – Delivery of the Community Organisers Expansion Programme	£784,375 and £415,625 distributed grant monies
	National Community Organisers' Meet Up – Ticket sales and contributions from membership	£10,000
	Consultancy fees and fees from trading – delivery of consultancy and training courses	£30,450
2019/2020	Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport – Delivery of the Community Organisers Expansion Programme	£935,949 and £253,125 distributed grant monies
Total		£5,074,251

Closing comment

In summary, this document has attempted to capture the current policy landscape and the impact of community organising in England as developed by Community Organisers over the last 4 years.

As an organisation we have developed our approach, tested our delivery model, and inspired a wide range of organisations at a national and local level to become interested in the power of community organising to support and enable community led social action.

We believe that we can continue to grow the impact of our work, and ensure that many more individuals and communities are supported to act on the issues that are most important to them.

If you would like to discuss our vision for community organising and for Community Organisers Limited please get in touch with:

Nick Gardham
Chief Executive Officer

e. nick.gardham@corganisers.org.uk

m. 0773 469 4626



Closing comment

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