

Health and Wellbeing Board

28 September 2022



**The Approach to Wellbeing
Recommendations arising from the final
evaluation**

**Report of Gordon Elliott, Head of Partnerships and Community
Engagement, Durham County Council
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Electoral Division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of the report is to present the Health and Wellbeing Board with the recommendations from the Evaluation of the Approach to Wellbeing (A2WB) in County Durham carried out by Teesside University and provide an update on action being taken to implement them.

Executive Summary

- 2 The A2WB was adopted across the County Durham Partnership (CDP) in 2019 and since that time has been subject to a three-year evaluation by Teesside University. The evaluation was undertaken in three stages with the final report being completed in March 2022, resulting in 5 overarching recommendations being made about actions that could be taken to further embed the approach across the CDP. The summary and full Evaluation Report resulting from this evaluation are attached at Appendices 2 and 3.
- 3 These 5 recommendations included: increasing efforts to recruit representative community champions from less well-connected areas; complementing A2WB training with measures to place the approach into role specifications and internal processes; developing practical ways in which the approach can be used to engage communities; and implementing measures that can be used longer-term to measure the success of the approach and the community engagement work across the CDP. These recommendations were presented to the A2WB steering group on 14 April 2022, and an action plan has been created in response.

Recommendations

4. The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:
 - (a) Accept the Evaluation of the Approach to Wellbeing in County Durham
 - (b) Note action being taken relating to the overarching recommendations.

Background

5. In 2019, County Durham developed an Approach to Wellbeing (A2WB) that was an asset-based model intended to engage communities and encourage devolution of power to them, alongside increasing shared decision making. The Approach built on the success of Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) and their long-established work with communities across County Durham.
6. The principles of the A2WB model were developed as part of an iterative process engaging members of the Resilient Communities Group, the Mental Health Strategic Partnership Board, the Public Health Team, the Mental Health Stakeholder Forum and teams within Durham County Council and the NHS.
7. Implementation of the model resulted in two strands of work; the design of a theoretical model and an 'audit' tool that would enable people to put the principles into practice, which resulted in the development of the Self-Assessment Framework.
8. The implementation of the A2WB was subject to a three-year evaluation undertaken by Teesside University. This evaluation was intended to take place in three phases with associated objectives as follows:
9. Phase 1: A retrospective review of early adopters in order to:
 - a) Explore the reasons why some teams adopted the use of the Wellbeing principles at an early stage to influence their work.
 - b) Consider what barriers there may be to others adopting the Wellbeing approach and how those barriers could be lifted.
 - c) Determine whether the use of the wellbeing principles has been helpful in framing future and more long-term intentions of use.
 - d) Explore whether the Wellbeing approach was used to underpin any emergency strategy or response put in place during the COVID-19 global pandemic
10. Phase 2: A contemporaneous chronicle of activities pertaining to community engagement, including testing, further development and refinement of the wellbeing principles, alongside the co-production of the evaluation objectives themselves, including:
 - a) Identifying specific communities of interest.
 - b) Reviewing the method of community engagement used.
 - c) Exploring the extent to which solutions to issues affecting communities have been co-produced.
 - d) Identifying examples of power being devolved to communities.

11. Phase 3: To examine essential factors pertaining to future internal evaluation of the adoption, impact of the adoption, and implementation of the wellbeing approach across relevant County Durham organisations, as well as development of a recommendation of a feasible model for how this may be achieved. This stage included:
 - a) Which measures of wellbeing will be taken as constitutive of success when gauging outcomes from the approach to wellbeing?
 - b) Where will responsibility for future evaluation lie, and how will continuation of evaluative measures be ensured in future?
 - c) How can the wellbeing approach itself be at the heart of future evaluation?
12. The remainder of this report is concerned with outlining the progress to date in implementing the A2WB, as well as highlighting the final recommendations arising from the evaluation.

Progress to date

13. Work has taken place to embed the A2WB across the County Durham Partnership since 2020 and includes the following:
 - a) It has been formally adopted by the Health & Wellbeing Board.
 - b) A2WB is embedded in strategies such as the Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy; developing Physical Activity Strategy; Growing up in County Durham Strategy; Poverty Strategy
 - c) Using the A2WB to inform the development of Community Hubs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic including working more closely with partners; taking a single point of contact approach; responding to local need; taking the time to ensure that needs are identified and met
 - d) Creating links and building relationships across the County Durham Partnership to build understanding and awareness of the A2WB and support its implementation in a wide range of projects and initiatives.
 - e) Developing a Self-Assessment Framework and related workshop to support teams to reflect on how their activities fit the A2WB
 - f) Gathering case studies to illustrate practical applications of the A2WB and help make it more tangible.
 - g) Developing an A2WB page on the County Durham Partnership website

- h) Identifying opportunities to pilot the use of ONS4 wellbeing measurement

Overarching Recommendations Arising from the Final Evaluation and related Actions

14. The Final Evaluation Report of the A2WB summarised the three phases of the evaluation and reflected on progress whilst making five overarching recommendations. In response to feedback, the recommendations have been further summarised and updated with action being taken to date:

a) Recommendation 1: build on our learning from the COVID Community Champions model as a successful vehicle for implementing the A2WB.

Action: Moving on from the COVID19 response, the County Durham Together Community Champions model is being developed in line with the A2WB with the potential to embed the A2WB through activities such as effective information sharing, engagement, feedback and co-production.

Work will take place to identify where potential gaps exist from the current Community Champions and a concerted effort to fill these gaps will be undertaken as a complementary County-wide approach to disseminating information, collating local views and feeding back into Council and Partnership initiatives.

b) Recommendation 2: The Self-Assessment framework (SAF) and wellbeing principles are useful at a strategic level but can seem time-consuming or removed from everyday practice in delivery settings. Embedding A2WB and SAF in the structure of how we work e.g. role descriptions, team meetings and development sessions to support a whole system 'culture shift' towards the Wellbeing Approach.

Action: an online workshop based around the SAF that supports teams to engage with the A2WB has been successfully piloted with a small team working on the Belmont Community Engagement project. This can be adapted for use in a range of settings, including face to face and in the wider community. The Wellbeing Approach Implementation Officer will liaise with colleagues across the County Durham Partnership to identify opportunities to roll out this approach across a number of settings and provide workshops to continue to implement and embed the Approach.

Further exploration with HR of how the Approach may be incorporated into role descriptions, training etc is required, however

this is interlinked with the additional work required through the County Durham Together Partnership with senior leaders and elected members.

c) Recommendation 3: practical mechanisms should be developed to help people to engage with the A2WB and SAF, particularly in community settings, including gathering qualitative data and linking to other initiatives and methodologies that support meaningful engagement such as co-production and consultation.

a) Action: a page on the CDP website is in development. It will make the SAF widely available to complete digitally alongside case studies from a range of settings. The Wellbeing Approach Implementation Officer is part of the Co-production Steering Group and is supporting the development of data sharing platforms with partners to ensure engagement and consultations are not duplicated. Work is being undertaken to ensure the A2WB is closely aligned to the development of the County Durham Together Initiative.

b) The Wellbeing Approach Implementation Officer is supporting the Consultation Officer Group processes including the Ladder of Engagement to incorporate co-production and co-design principles into the council's approaches to gaining feedback from residents. She is also supporting specific areas of work eg the Growing Up in County Durham Strategy and the Inclusive Economic Strategy.

c) Initial conversations with the VCS have suggested that working with groups like the Community Resilience Forum, the A2WB could form the basis of a 'quality mark' that enables smaller organisations to demonstrate good practice.

d) Recommendation 4: The impact of the A2WB across County Durham should be measured using a standardised, consistent and universal measurement of wellbeing in addition to qualitative data gathering.

e) Discussions have commenced about how the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) can be further developed to be more of a Joint Strategic Asset Assessment (JSAA), utilising strengths that already exist in communities.

f) Recommendation 5: ONS-4 Measures of Wellbeing should be piloted (in conjunction with the Personal Wellbeing Scale) as the quantitative measure.

Action: Feedback is being gathered to identify appropriate opportunities to pilot the measurement and establish how it can be used more widely.

Conclusion

15. This paper highlights the progress to date in embedding the Approach to Wellbeing in activities across the County Durham Partnership and summarises the recommendations arising from the final evaluation report along with some potential next steps.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

N/A

Finance

Funding has been made available for a post to take forward the Approach to Wellbeing and integrate this work across the County Durham Partnership.

Consultation

The principles within the Approach to Wellbeing support the Council and Partners in gaining feedback from residents in a meaningful way.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

N/A

Climate Change

N/A.

Human Rights

N/A.

Crime and Disorder

N/A.

Staffing

A Wellbeing Approach Implementation Officer has been recruited until January 2024.

Accommodation

N/A.

Risk

N/A.

Procurement

Procurement colleagues are part of the A2W Steering Group and have used to the Approach in developing the Mental Health Alliance

Appendix 2: Evaluation of the Approach to Wellbeing in County Durham – Full Report

Appendix 3: Evaluation of the Approach to Wellbeing in County Durham – Summary
