South Tees Local Delivery Pilot

Local Delivery Pilot – Organisation Responsible
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
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Brief background about the place
South Tees comprises two neighbouring unitary authorities, Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland. It makes up approximately 40% of the Tees Valley sub-region, within north east England.

South Tees has stark contrasts, comprising the large rural area of East Cleveland, through the coastal communities of Redcar and Saltburn and the urban conurbation that extends along the River Tees into Middlesbrough, the largest settlement of the area. This unique geography, whilst reflecting a broad range of diverse and challenging elements, provides a distinct, cohesive and manageable area for the pilot.

This area has significant social and economic issues across the entire place which contribute to the inequality in both Council areas. We believe that our stubborn inequality is typified by small physical barriers and massive cultural barriers across a range of issues, specifically in encouraging the inactive to become more active.

What is the South Tees Pilot trying to achieve?
Our vision for our Local Area Pilot is to place increasing physical activity - more people being more active more often - at the centre of whole system change, driving our high level social, economic and environmental aspirations for South Tees, and addressing stubborn inequalities in our communities to improve Quality of Life.

We recognise the opportunities provided by getting the inactive to be active, particularly where that inactivity is driven by poverty and inequality of opportunity. This programme is an opportunity to use sport and physical activity to drive improvement to wider social determinants across health, educational attainment, employment and community cohesion.

Who is the target audience?
Our Local Area Pilot consists of two complementary elements. The first element delivered across our place - South Tees (population 280,000), seeking to achieve population change within four specific communities of interest, hidden across the whole area and not geographically defined:

- people suitable for prehabilitation prior to surgery
- people with Type II Diabetes
- people accessing community based, commercial weight loss services
- health professionals

The second element drills down into four ‘focus’ communities clustered across the border between the two boroughs of South Tees that experience the greatest inequalities challenge. With a combined population of approximately 24,000, the once thriving
communities of North Ormesby (IMD 2015 rank 2nd), Grangetown (6th), Brambles & Thorntree (10th) and South Bank (182nd) have witnessed significant social and economic decline.

**Progress in the Pilot (September 2018 – January 2019)**

**What has been happening in the South Tees Local Delivery Pilot?**

We have been working with local agencies to get a wide representation within our partnership and agreeing the general principles and vision of what we want to achieve. To kickstart this element we held a major conference on whole system change attended by over 130 people. We produced a conference report which brought together the presentations, discussion and learning from the day for local partners and beyond. This was a key action to start to build local knowledge and understanding of whole system change as a real and achievable ambition.

It is important to highlight how the local delivery pilots are breaking new ground and reframing the traditional, almost transactional funder-recipient relationship; with Sport England being a local partner not just a national funder. This helps us to sell the concept of local delivery pilots and how radically different this approach is for us, and Sport England.

We have developed an evaluation framework which reflects the key outcomes we want to achieve through the pilot; charting the specific and over-arching outcomes that contribute to the realisation of our vision. This framework enables us to demonstrate where our actions contribute to our vision. The process evaluation of our pilot programme will capture both the journey and the learning from the pilot. Whole system change, distributed leadership and our approach to tackling inactivity at scale are the building blocks of the programme and the story of the process; relationships, interactions, decisions, barriers and levers will play an important role in ‘replicability’. This element of the programme is supported and delivered by a partnership between Sheffield Hallam University and Northumbria University; utilising a realist approach through an embedded researcher model.

We have developed a structure of thematic groups to act as the ‘engine’ for each strand of work and engaging local organisations to ensure we build our insight during the development phase. With the support of our newly recruited core team, each theme is developing deeper insight into the barriers, levers, challenges and opportunities we need to work through to progress our ambitions. Each thematic group will now begin the process of conversations to identify the determinants of behaviour for each target population. When we have a better understanding of these determinants, we can start to develop appropriate interventions that support and facilitate a positive change in behaviour.

In partnership with Teesside University we have started to develop our understanding of our four focus wards; taking time to speak to key people within these communities to build our understanding of the things that influence people’s daily lives. This is just the start of this work, helping us to refine our thinking and build a case for targeting specific populations in these communities.
We have a new name! The South Tees Local Delivery Pilot just wasn’t something we ever wanted to keep as a title, so working with a local branding company and our local partnership we began to develop a brand. We wanted to learn from our experience and insight, and we knew that words like ‘active’, ‘sport’ and ‘physical activity’ created an immediate barrier for some people. After talking through several options our partnership decided on ‘You’ve Got This’. This is a statement of support, inferring that the individual already has the capacity to achieve. It isn’t obvious, but it is common language. We feel this captures our ambition and gives us something to create a story around.

**Recent thoughts and learning**

- System change is hard! Maintaining the support and interest of leaders across multiple agencies to a programme which is built on test and learn and emergence without a project plan and exhaustive Project Initiation Document is tricky!
- This is a new way of developing a programme that is very different to previous initiatives such as regeneration programmes. Significant resources and determination are needed to develop an understanding of the approach at all levels of the system.
- System change is reliant upon people and relationships; invest time in understanding the culture and environment that people operate in if you want them to understand what needs to change and their role in making it happen.
- The LDP is not a panacea; partners should not consider it to be the ‘answer’ to all the issues in a locality, but rather one element of a systemic response to health inequalities.
- Sometimes our new world aspiration does not fit with old world systems. You cannot try to force a ‘fit’, you need to be patient and expect to explain the same principle or idea numerous times. You also need to be continuously on guard against falling back into previous ways of working – the default position is easy to slide in to.
- It can be hard to say, ‘I don’t have an answer for you, this is something we have to work through together’. Some of the things we are trying to do are radically different from anything we have ever done – or anyone else. Although not having an answer can be frustrating; it can also be an empowering process of learning, if we can move past the sometimes uncomfortable feeling of not knowing.
- People want us to succeed. The recent community of learning events highlighted to us how much support we have and how willing other areas are to share and learn.

**What’s coming up**

Our work around our focus wards will intensify, working with residents and using Intervention Mapping as a process to identify the determinants of inactivity. This will form the foundation to co-produce a range of interventions with residents that use behaviour change theory to create appropriate responses to the determinants identified. We are developing new ways to engage with target communities and develop our understanding of their lived experience of coping with long term conditions or other negative aspects of their lives. We want to utilise the arts to create a space where people can express their personal experiences and emotional responses to aspects of their lives that inhibit their ability to be more active. As we develop a greater understanding of our communities we will also implement a process to gather our baseline data – to understand what the picture of people’s lives looks like now, so that we can understand what we do and how we do it alters this picture.
We are undertaking a process of Actor Mapping. An actor map is a visual depiction of the key organizations and individuals that influence a topic, allowing insight into the players within a system. Actor maps identify opportunities to improve a system’s overall performance; for example, by identifying where connections are weak or where gaps could be filled. This is just one of several approaches we will utilise to build our knowledge and understanding of our local system.

To underpin all the themes within our local delivery pilot, we are working with a range of local partners to develop a local, ‘community offer’ that provides appropriate provision to all the target populations and other inactive residents across South Tees. Our community offer builds on the learning of previous programmes such as Prepwell (Health Foundation), Reactivate (CSAF) and work with Slimming World. Our offer to our communities will incorporate both existing physical activity provision and new resourced activities and provision.

We will also build our brand. A strong, recognisable brand provides a platform to develop and deliver a range of interventions; training, campaigns, local knowledge, peer support programmes and physical products that support physical activity and active lives.

At a policy level we are arranging a master class with planners and transport managers to explore opportunities to develop our shared knowledge and understanding of key policies and actions which can support active travel and living.

January 2019