

Local Trust  
creating  
lasting  
change



# What's happening in **Big Local**?

Awarding funds from  
The National Lottery®

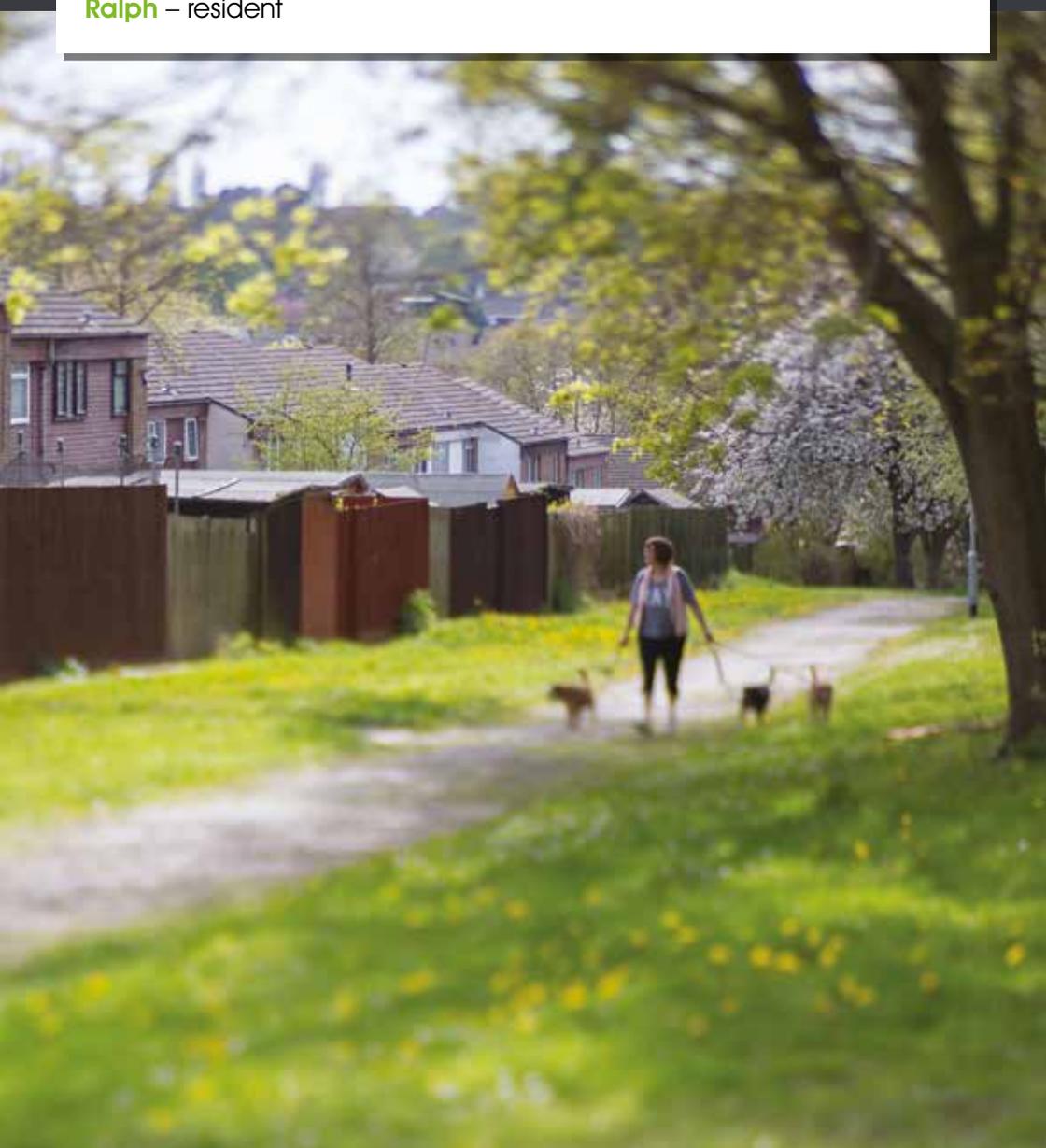




**Sale West Big Local, Manchester**

**‘It’s the first time ever a major funder has had the confidence to say to residents, “we’re putting you at the front and you can make the decisions.”’**

**Ralph** – resident



# Welcome

Traditional programmes aimed at creating better places to live often fail the communities where they’re needed most. That’s because the focus is usually short-term and often on a particular theme or specific success measures.

## **Big Local is different.**

Our communities make improvements that are sustainable, because we let residents take control, and offer them the long-term funding and support they need to transform their community.

Residents have identified the issues that matter most in their community and they’re working with those they trust to deliver local solutions – tackling everything from unemployment and poor quality housing, to low levels of community cohesion

and a lack of opportunities for young people.

The first Big Local areas were announced in 2010 and the programme runs until 2027. In this booklet we’re proud to share the story so far, using findings from independent research and the experiences of some of the 150 Big Local communities across England.

We hope it will leave you as inspired as we are, by the incredible people who are embracing the challenges and rewards of transforming their communities, and by the huge potential for lasting change through the coming years of Big Local and beyond.

Be part of the journey: visit our website [localtrust.org.uk](http://localtrust.org.uk) or follow @LocalTrust on Twitter.

**More than £50m**  
spent nationally  
on Big Local so far

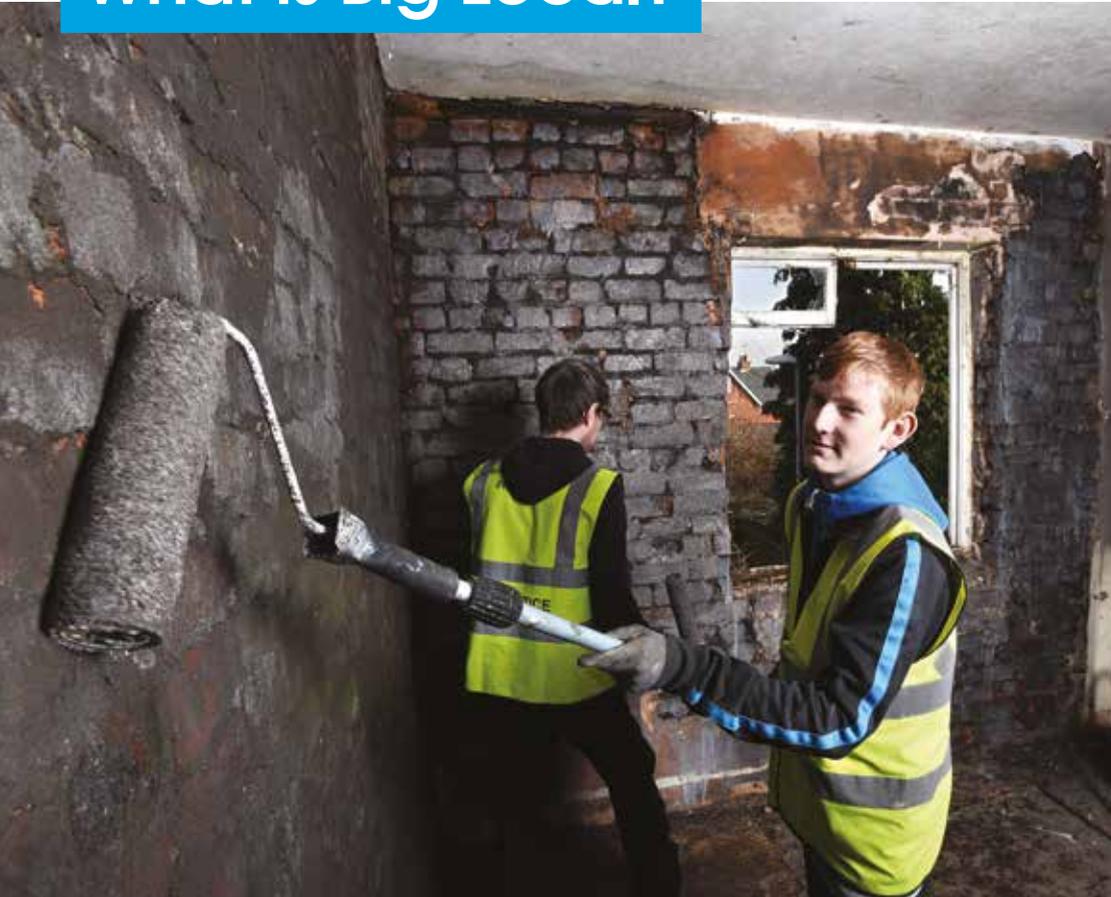
**Over 94,000**  
residents reached  
by Big Local  
activities

**Over 3,000**  
residents  
actively involved

(Source: NCVO)

(Source: NCVO)

# What is Big Local?



## Goldthorpe and Bolton on Dearne Big Local, near Barnsley

**'A major priority for us is to reduce the number of long-term empty housing properties in our community. We heard a businessman had bought 57 properties in our area at auction and we purchased four of these empty houses from him to let at an affordable rent. A local organisation is refurbishing the properties, creating seven new construction apprenticeships. We are providing good quality affordable homes and boosting the local economy.'**

April – resident

Big Local lets residents in 150 areas around England use at least £1m each to make a massive and lasting positive difference to their communities. It's funded by the Big Lottery Fund and managed by Local Trust.

**We believe** that residents know best what's needed in their area, so we give them the power and funding to choose what to do and to make it happen.

**We believe** that it takes time to develop residents' ability to take the lead and deliver sustained change, so we support each area for 15 years.

**We believe** in collaboration not competition, so Big Local brings together all the local talent, ambition, skills and energy from individuals, groups and organisations who want to make their area an even better place to live.



**The Big Local programme is designed to achieve four outcomes:**

1. Communities are better able to identify local needs and take action in response to them.
2. People have increased skills and confidence, so that they continue to identify and respond to needs in the future.
3. The community makes a difference to the needs it prioritises.
4. People feel that their area is an even better place to live.



**Resident-led**  
programme

**150 areas**  
across  
England



**15 years**  
of consistent  
funding and  
support

**£1m**  
funding to  
each area



# Putting residents in control



## Catton Grove Big Local, Norwich

**'We had a social event on the allotment, put the bunting up, asked people what they wanted in terms of improving the site, how they wanted Big Local to help them. It was a great way to involve people - it created a buzz! Then we set up a community plot on the allotment. People come who live in flats but want to be out in the open air growing things. There is an allotment association now and when the Big Local funding runs out we foresee that the allotment association will carry on and manage the community plot.'**

**Miriam** – resident

**Our funding approach puts residents in control because we offer:**

### 1. Time and pace

Big Local is about consistently funding an area for 15 years - they know that we won't take it away from them.

### 2. Willingness to take risks

Big Local is built on relationships and trust, not rules and regulations.

### 3. 'Light touch' and flexible support

Big Local runs with a small team at the centre and outreach through 'people on the ground' and specialist providers.

### 4. Sustainability through maximising assets and investing in communities

The money ceases to be the focus; the main thing for residents is the community working together to get things done.

(Source: IVAR)



**94%** of those with voting rights on local steering groups are residents

(Source: NCVO)



**90%** of local steering group members feel confident that they have based their plans on what their community identified as most needed

(Source: NCVO)



Over **90%** of the programme's overall spend goes directly to areas

(Source: NCVO)



# Finding local solutions to local challenges



## Westfield Big Local, Sheffield

**'We negotiated with the council to complete the asset transfer of our local community centre which was in danger of being closed down due to lack of funding. As a safe, social place where local people can come to play, work and train, the centre supports all of our priorities. We gathered lots of information from visits to community buildings run by other Big Local areas. This gave us confidence and introduced us to a wealth of help and advice that made our journey so much easier.'**

**Roger** – resident

**Residents can choose how to tackle their area's priorities and most are combining four ways of working.**

**1. Commissioning** – residents commission an external organisation to deliver a project.

**For example,** Growing Together Big Local in Northampton commissioned Change of Scene to offer outdoor adventure activities to disengaged young people from the area. This has developed young people's confidence and life skills and given them the opportunity to gain qualifications. Some of them are now employed by Change of Scene.

**2. Co-working** – where an existing organisation in the area is already delivering something that fits with local priorities, residents use Big Local funding to enhance this, to reach more or different people, to run it for longer or bring added value.

**For example,** the Liverpool charity St Andrew's Community Network were already running a successful advice service for those in debt in the Clubmoor Big Local area. So residents focused on tackling long term causes of debt, investing £1,000 for St Andrew's Community Network to develop a money education course for local people.

**3. Co-creating** – residents work with a range of people, organisations and groups to create or design a new project, activity or service, using their combined resources.

**For example,** North West Ipswich Big Local consulted with residents and local skaters to shape the design of a skatepark that was joint-funded by Big Local, the council and another local organisation.

**4. Bidding** – residents invite people and organisations to bid for funding to deliver a project that will help tackle local priorities.

**For example,** Three Parishes Big Local in Shropshire ran a 'community chest' small grants scheme. In one village in the area, there was nowhere to socialise. A church there successfully bid for funding so they could buy tables and chairs to set up a community café.

(Source: CDF)



# Big Local on the map

Big Local areas are communities in England that have often missed out on funding and resources over many years.

**150** Big Local areas

**6,800**  
average  
population size  
of a Big Local  
area

**89%**  
of areas can be  
broadly classed  
as urban and  
**11%** as rural  
towns or villages

**Over 1m**  
people live within  
a Big Local area



# Residents' top 10 priorities



**1** Environment



**2** Community cohesion



**3** Jobs and economy



**4** Youth



**5** Health and wellbeing



**6** Training and skills



**7** Community facilities



**8** Crime prevention



**9** Financial inclusion



**10** Older people

# Building residents' skills, confidence and networks



Conniburrow Big Local, Milton Keynes

**'When I came to my first Big Local drop-in craft session I was suffering from anxiety and bipolar. But I took the step to try the group and was given a lovely greeting and offered a cup of tea and lunch. I was soon coming every week. I have made so many friends and I'm the one now looking out for who walks in and needs a cuppa. I have even been on a safeguarding course so that I can help run a new walking bus for children. Volunteering with Big Local has made my confidence and my self-worth so much better – it has affected my life in the most brilliant way.'**

**Karen** – resident

Many Big Local areas have little or no tradition of resident organising at a community-wide level, and none have experience of managing a community initiative on this scale.

Often, people want to be more in control but don't know how. Big Local is acting as a catalyst to bring people together. In the process, residents are building their capacity to identify and deliver the change their area needs.

Residents are learning from each other, from paid workers, from Big Local training and networking events, from people in other Big Local areas and simply by doing things they haven't done before.



**72%** of local steering group members have learnt new things or developed new skills as a result of being involved with Big Local

(Source: NCVO)



**37** training days and **21** networking events held for Big Local residents in 2014-15



# The future



## Wormholt and White City Big Local, London

**'We discovered a wealth of talent and entrepreneurial spirit in the community but also a high number of people who weren't in training or employment. So we commissioned a "Start your own enterprise" course and mentoring programme and 18 local residents stayed for the duration. We're really excited about the impact they will have within our community now that they are armed with confidence and practical tools to move forward with their business plans. We're also keen to run further courses to inspire a new band of entrepreneurs to dream big and make a difference in our area.'**

Lucy – resident

Residents tell us that leading local change is not always straightforward or easy. But they are equally clear that it is hugely rewarding and that they are making a difference.

Big Local funding and support is available until 2027, so the progress residents have made so far is just the start.

At Local Trust, we will:

- continue to support residents to gain control, skills and confidence to make a difference to the things that matter most to them in their communities
- use rigorous research, evaluation and story-telling to learn; help areas achieve greater impact; and influence others to put residents in the lead.



**88%** of local steering group members feel confident their group will achieve their goals in the longer term

(Source: NCVO)

## Long-term research

### Communities in Control:

A study of Big Local areas by NIHR School for Public Health Research to see if community health and wellbeing increases when local people have greater control over improving their area.

**Our Bigger Story:** A multimedia evaluation of Big Local currently led by the Third Sector Research Centre at the University of Birmingham. They have trained residents to capture videos, podcasts and photographs about the changes they are seeing in their communities.

Find out more and get involved:  
visit [localtrust.org.uk](http://localtrust.org.uk) or follow  
[@LocalTrust](https://twitter.com/LocalTrust) on Twitter.



This booklet draws on the following independent research. Full reports are available at [localtrust.org.uk/library](http://localtrust.org.uk/library)

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Community Development Foundation (CDF), 2015, Plans to action

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Institute for Voluntary Action Research (IVAR), 2015, Funding for resident control: the Local Trust experience

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National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), 2015, Big Local early years evaluation

**‘Big Local is making all the difference in the world. I feel different about where I live, I feel more supported, feel more part of the community. There are so many new learning areas ahead, it’s exciting!’**

## **Big Local resident**

(Source: NCVO)



## **Local Trust**

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Local Trust company number 7833396 and charity number 1147511