

How to measure change

Measuring change helps your Big Local partnership to assess your Big Local plan - to find out what's going well, what isn't going as planned, how things can be improved - and what you have learned from the experience.

This guide can help you when [completing a plan review](#).

Collecting peoples' experiences

"Collecting information about how people think and feel can be a good way to get feedback about your activities and the difference they have made."

How to get feedback on how you're doing

Story telling: you might talk to individuals who have benefited from Big Local activities and projects and who have indicated that they are happy to share their experience.

Case studies: a case study might draw on a range of different people's and different groups' experiences to draw them together and create a more in-depth 'story'. Here are resources on [how to write a case study](#) and [how to produce a film case study](#).

Suggestion boxes: creating a suggestion box and keeping track of the suggestions made can help you to reflect on changes, and/or possibilities for future changes to improve things or work you are doing.

Group discussion/focus groups: are a good way of getting people together to discuss their own personal experience or comment on a particular topic. These might be especially useful when bringing the partnership members together to discuss the progress they have made. Here is a guide on [how to run a focus group](#).

Rating activities and progress: collecting feedback on the progress of activities can be fun and easy. There are different methods you can use, with some partnerships rating the progress of their activities using a [Red Amber Green \(RAG\) template](#), or a Boston Matrix template. You can then compare progress across activities over time.

Vox pops: are short and quick interviews which are filmed and used to gather opinions or comments from people on an issue or topic. Here is a guide on [how to film a vox pop](#).

Films: can be a very useful evaluation tool that can capture events, engage people with your plan, or show how people's attitudes and feelings toward your Big Local area have changed. Find out more about multimedia evaluation with [Our Bigger Story](#), and see [films from Big Local areas as part of the evaluation of Big Local](#).

Collecting numbers and data

“You can collect your own data or use information that already exists. Once you know what you want to collect, you can find out where to get it or how you can collect it yourself.”

How to collect your own data

Attendance: counting the number of people who have benefitted from Big Local activities can be really valuable. You can collect information about different things, for example the number of people who attended an event, activity or used a service. You can also compare information across events or years to see changes.

Surveys/questionnaires: are a good way of collecting the same information from people, and you can do this in different ways (online, in person or by phone). [Information on surveys/questionnaires.](#)

- **online survey** tools like [Survey Monkey](#) can be really easy to use. However, remember that people will need to have access to (and use of) a computer to participate. [Using online survey tools.](#)
- **social media polls** can be quick ways of getting information from people. You can create polls on [Facebook](#), [Google](#) and [Twitter](#).
- **‘smiley face’ surveys** are simple ways of capturing people’s feelings and perceptions. These can be useful in getting feedback from children or in multi-language environments. [Using smiley surveys.](#)
- **face-to-face / telephone surveys** can be effective ways of finding out about wider feelings about the area.

Collecting personal data: if you are collecting personal data it is important that you collect and manage this information carefully.

Using open data

It is unlikely you will be able to collect all of your own information, so using existing data can save you lots of time. It can help to reveal the wider context in which your Big Local area is happening. Open data is free and gives access to wide range of data on a variety of issues.

- **Local Insight** is a digital platform where Big Local areas can access data that is specific to their Big Local area. Read this guide on [how to use Local Insight](#) for more information.
- **Government data** is a website where you can access data from government departments and agencies, public bodies and local authorities. [Access the government data source.](#)

Involving people in measuring change

Getting help with your plan review will depend on what you need and want to do. However, it will be difficult for one person to review your activities and the difference they have made, so involving other people is key.

You can ask people and organisations you work with to collect information. Community researchers can carry out research for you. You can also get someone to coordinate a review of all of your activities to tell you how they are doing.

“You can collect information about your activities from the people and organisations that you work with. Getting them to collect information on participants, service use, attendees etc., can save you time, increase their own skills and also help them to monitor their own impact.”

Community research is a collaborative and empowering approach to research where community members and groups set the agenda and are involved as researchers. Here are examples from Big Local areas training community researchers in [Whitley](#) and [West End, Morecambe](#). You could also conduct [community research with a university](#).

For more information, here is a resource from ARVAC on [how to carry out community research](#).

Presenting what you've collected

Now that you have gathered your information and evidence, you might think about how to present and communicate it to others. They can be a fun way to engage others in your work and to promote what you do. There are different ways you can do this, for example through [writing a report](#), blogs, infographics, posters and podcasts.

Watch this example of an animated illustration from Lawrence Weston.
https://youtu.be/a2T6o57ic_g

Here are some other [creative ways to communicate your findings](#)

Further resources

For more information about impact, see the blogs '[Why measure impact?](#)' and '[Tips for measuring your impact](#)'.

- [NCVO- Know How, non-profit](#) – free, online resources and “how to” guides and information on a range of topics
- [The Outcomes Toolkit](#)– free resource for community members, groups and organisations on measuring impact
- [Inspiring impact](#) – an online resource for measuring impact

- [NCVO](#)- how to write an evaluation report, including considering your audience and how to structure your report.

Don't forget that you can also contact the research team at Local Trust for any support or queries you may have about measuring your impact. We will also be updating these resources on an ongoing basis.

This document will be developed over time with input from the people using this material.

If you have thoughts on how this document can be made more useful for you, particularly if you live in one of the Big Local areas, please let us know.

Local Trust

020 3588 0565

info@localtrust.org.uk

www.localtrust.org.uk

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If you need this document in other formats or a community language please get in touch with Local Trust and we will help you.

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