

Tackling a problem

Aim: To tackle a problem the Big Local partnership is stuck with.

WHY USE THIS TOOL?

To look more closely at the barriers that are creating a problem and find solutions. It can help to:

- Confront some of the challenges facing the Big Local partnership
- Explore different solutions
- Find consensus around one.

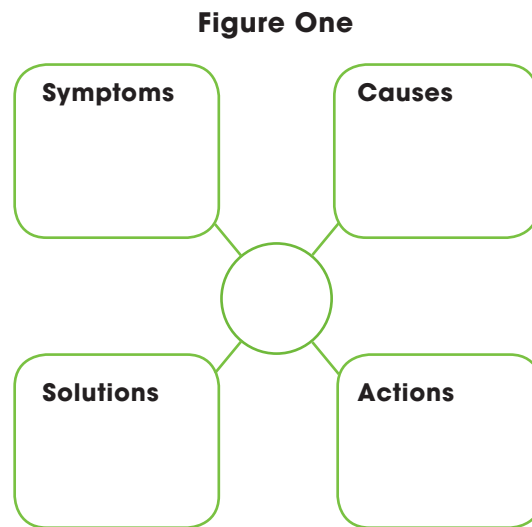
Preparing for the activity

AN EXAMPLE IN PRACTICE

HAVA Big Local in Leeds is doing well with many different projects and local activities. They have away-days about twice a year and in early 2019 used one to review how they were doing. One frequent problem they identified was that not enough planning was going into events they organised in the community. In order to tackle this, they used the following tool to great effect.

PREPARING FOR THE ACTIVITY

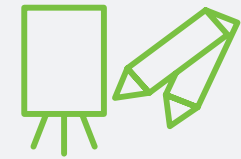
On a flip chart draw four large boxes linked to a circle as in Figure One. In turn, each box has a heading: Symptoms, Causes, Solutions, Actions.



YOU WILL NEED



A large room with a flipchart stand



Flipchart pens and paper



30 mins for the activity



Don't Forget!

It is best if the content of this session remains confidential to the group. Make this clear before beginning and during. The main conclusions at the end can be used openly.

Running the activity

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1. ASK THE GROUP

Ask the group, for example:

What are some of the main problems facing progress in carrying out the **Big Local Plan**?

Write these up on flip chart paper and ask the group to choose one to work on.

Write the name of this problem in the circle on the prepared flip chart sheet

2. SYMPTOMS

Then ask in turn:

What are the symptoms of the problem?
i.e. how do we know it is happening?

This could be for example, confusion about who is doing what, stress, community events not going well.

Write notes in the Symptoms box.

3. CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS

What is causing the problem?

Write points in the Causes box.

Then take each cause in turn and invite ideas on a solution for each one.

Write suggestions in the Solution box.

It may be useful to take time to consider different solutions, looking at the advantages and disadvantages of each one.

If need be, use another flip chart sheet and take the main points agreed on into the box on the Solutions.



Ask people not to name names or blame people but keep it more general.

4. ACTION PLANNING

Then choose one or two agreed solutions for action-planning. Use a new sheet for this.

One way to do this is, for each action use the headings of: **Who, When, What** and **How**.

What does the group think?

Invite general discussion of the material on the flip charts. It is important to say that we are not trying to blame individuals but look at what support we may need to get on with things.

Reflections and next steps

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REMEMBER

- By separating out symptoms from causes it helps to be clearer about what is going on - often these are mixed up together.
- For next steps, take photos of your sheets as a record. Make sure the agreed action points are followed up.



This is one of a series of DIY tools created for the 150 communities taking part in the Big Local programme. Find out more at www.localtrust.org.uk

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