



Neighbourhood Action Network Programme for partners in 2008-2009

Thank you for participating in year one of the Neighbourhood Action Network (NAN). We would like to propose a programme for the second year of NAN, based on our experience of the first year of the programme and feedback from partners.

Below we have outlined this new programme design, options for involvement and key dates for partners over the next year. We look forward to your comments.

Please complete and return the attached sheet to indicate your preference for a workstream to be involved in for the second year of NAN.

1. Introduction - NAN year one review

The Neighbourhood Action Network (NAN) made significant achievements in its first year. The NAN events included five action learning days and five consortium meetings that allowed partners to learn and gain support from one another, while also receiving insight through presentations from external speakers that added additional expertise.

Our practical projects with each local authority partner have included research and facilitation on a number of themes and are due to be completed in March 2008. The findings from these practical projects, along with our research on local charters, the future role of ward councillors, the role of housing associations in neighbourhoods, and the implications of the Duty to Involve, have helped support partner thinking and innovation, looking at new models or ways of working, or initiatives to tackle problems and communicate more effectively.

We have received feedback on year one from our partners and adjusted our year two programme to reflect this. In particular we have:

- continued our focus on action learning days but will relate these firmly to local authorities' experience with more time allocated to learning from partners' experiences
- attempted to organise fewer, but more substantial, meetings
- decided not to make a distinction between consortium meetings and action learning days, but instead hold a series of seminars throughout the year
- put a clear emphasis in our work with individual local authority partners on facilitating discussion locally
- planned to produce a number of reports which will feed the experience of our partners into government and other key agencies.

2. NAN programme in year two

The programme for the second year of NAN is designed to build upon work from last year and address key issues that emerged through our practical projects and policy work, NAN seminars and research. It also aims to assist local authorities in meeting anticipated challenges expected to emerge with the implementation of the Local Government and Public Health Act 2007 and the new CLG focus on empowerment. This will be accomplished by:

- developing a report that presents our findings from last year and how they relate to local authorities' implementation of the new policy agenda
- developing three workstreams around the following themes: devolving funds to localities, organisational culture, and neighbourliness and belonging
- developing three scoping papers focusing on each of our workstreams that will incorporate research, both nationally and internationally, to identify a series of models to inspire practical action and fresh thinking
- providing hands-on support through two facilitated workshops in each local authority to develop the themes of the work at the local level
- offering a series of action learning events that will include seminars, a two-day summit, and an initial day-long kick-off meeting
- informing policy by publishing reports of our findings and ensuring that these are fed into central government and other key agencies.

3. Workstreams

3.1 Workstream themes

Over the last year we have carried out practical projects in five areas: organisational culture, diversity, councillor roles, demonstrating the impact of neighbourhood working, and youth engagement. Building on this work and the feedback from partners on year one, we are proposing work on the following workstreams in year two:

Workstream one: Devolving funds to localities

Nationally, much emphasis has recently been placed on the opportunities to devolve funds to localities as a way to promote spending effectiveness, as well as engage and empower residents. Many local authorities have developed different ways to enable residents or councillors to be involved in spending decisions. Using case studies, various tools and techniques that devolve money to local areas as a means of engaging local people will be considered. These will include:

- community kitties and participatory budgeting
- local councillor-controlled funds
- community chests
- local area or neighbourhood action funding

- tenant funds
- various models for allowing community groups to influence spending.

In the last year there has been considerable government attention paid to community kitties. This workstream will broaden discussion to include the full spectrum of approaches to increase resident engagement and empowerment over local spending.

Workstream two: Organisational culture

Over the last decade there has been a growing acknowledgement within local government that one of the major impediments to improving service delivery is the culture of the organisation. A local authority can fine tune its departmental structures time and again, but if the culture of the authority does not support cross departmental working, fails to accommodate local setting of priorities, and does not put empowerment of residents and service users at its core, then neighbourhood working will be frustrated.

Our work over the last three years on our neighbourhood programmes has taught us the importance of a supportive organisational culture. We have started work on this theme, in collaboration with the IDeA and the Leadership Centre for Local Government, and are keen to take this forward in a more substantial programme of work.

Case study examples may include local authorities' successful attempts to:

- build the authority to hold public agencies to account
- influence council decisions about strategic services not just ward-based decisions
- galvanise corporate support for empowerment and neighbourhood working.

Tools and methods may include examples that have proven successful in other parts of the world, or the UK.

Workstream three: Neighbourliness and belonging

Building social capital through social networking at the community level can lead to stronger, healthier communities and a sense of neighbourliness and belonging among local residents. In recent decades increased mobility, longer life expectancy, the breakdown of the extended family and an increasingly diverse and rapidly changing population have changed the way we live, and the extent to which we feel connected and a sense of belonging within in our neighbourhoods. A good way to promote belonging is to encourage local residents to engage with others through community projects that may meet their own specific interests, and find other ways to develop neighbourly relationships. This could include initiatives like street parties or inter-generational work that not only move residents out of isolation but towards civic engagement.

The initial report of this work will include suggestions for possible projects and rationale for taking them forward, building on the Young Foundation’s parallel work on wellbeing and neighbourhood working.

3.2 Practical work under each workstream

Each local authority is invited to join one of the workstreams during year two. The practical work under all three workstreams will be structured in the same way:

<p>Scoping papers- including case studies published by Young Foundation</p>	<p>Workshop I - held with each authority – half day</p>	<p>Reflect and move forward- Authority undertakes its own work and thinking on theme</p>	<p>Workshop II- held with each authority – full day</p>	<p>Final report- findings feed into NAN year two final report</p>
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Scoping paper for each workstream

For these scoping papers we propose to look at the range of promising practice within each workstream area to both take a snapshot of the current picture and consider possible options for the future. Local government is moving towards informing, consulting and devolving power to local people as part of the new Duty to Involve. Much good practice already exists amongst authorities who have been working in neighbourhoods and engaging communities as part of their core practice for some time. International experience and practice is also relevant.

These reports will be used as the starting point for hands-on facilitation provided in a series of two on-site workshops, as well as during our wider events.

Workshops

The Young Foundation will facilitate two workshops with each of our local authority partners, at an appropriate time for them. The purpose of the workshops will be to offer facilitated discussion and hands-on training for an audience of the authority’s choice (officers, councillors, local residents, staff from partner agencies, etc) and to help the authority develop actions and activities on the subject area.

- **Workshop one: strategy session -** For the first session the Young Foundation will provide a half-day workshop with each local authority partner. Using the scoping paper for the workstream, the Young Foundation will present the findings to a group of officers and discuss local concerns and how the ideas within it could be developed within their local context.
- **Time for reflection**
We have found in year one that many of our partners have appreciated some space to think through new ideas and implement different things after our

research with them. With this in mind we have built in time in between the two workshops to reflect and move forward.

- **Workshop two: facilitated session** - A second facilitated workshop session will be carried out with each authority, focusing on the same workstream. Partners can choose to make use of this day in the most effective form for them, selecting the audience, agenda and timing. The Young Foundation will provide three NAN team members to support the day.

The intention is to use this second session to help create a series of actions or activities which the local authority will work on in the future. With this in mind the session could, for example, be carried out with officers from different levels on the cultures in an organisation, or with local residents and organisations on how to build a model for increased local decision making over funding, etc.

To promote local authority partnership and leadership, The Young Foundation proposes to lead the facilitation of this workshop, but with co-facilitation from local authorities.

Findings feed into NAN year two final report

The findings and experiences from each of the two workstreams will be captured in the NAN year two final report, described below.

4. Reporting

4.1 Summary report on findings from year one

Using findings from the first year of NAN this summary report will discuss:

- the current state of the neighbourhood agenda
- what progress has been made towards the goals of the White Paper?
- what are the implications of the new government focus on empowerment?
- is it time for a progress check and to reinvigorate the debate?
- what do neighbourhoods want and need?

This summary report will be completed for the NAN year two kick-off meeting in May 2008.

4.2 Summary report on the findings from year two

After the completion of year two, we develop a summary report of our findings. Drawing together our findings from year two, and our previous work on NAN and Transforming Neighbourhoods, this report will capture the emerging themes and challenges for local authorities and highlight the examples of best practice we have

discovered during our research. The report will be disseminated widely to inform both central government and other local authorities.

4.3. Scoping papers for each workstream

These two major publications will be complemented by three shorter scoping papers on the three workstream themes. As described above, these will combine case studies and analysis and be used in the first instance to shape the practical work under each of the workstreams, but will also be published on the Young Foundation's website to disseminate the findings more widely.

5. Events

This year we propose a series of seminars and events that will provide NAN partners with the opportunity to exchange ideas, discuss the challenges they face, gain knowledge and support from one another. The series of events and seminars are designed as a sequence, and build upon one another. For each seminar there will be opportunities for site visits, if a partner would like to host a day seminar, on a particular workstream.

It is important to note that the programme is not necessarily designed to have practical projects within a particular workstream completed by the time of the corresponding seminar. This is a fluid process where partners at various stages of practical project implementation can come together to learn from one another and gain additional knowledge from outside research.

To allow for more time to exchange ideas in an informal setting, we have proposed two large events – a day-long kick-off meeting that will be held at the beginning of the programme and a two-day summit to be held towards the end of the programme year. All of these meetings will also feature updates from the Young Foundation on learning from the NAN workstreams and other relevant Young Foundation projects, and presentations from local authority partners.

May 2008

Kick off seminar - one day event

This first meeting will review the Young Foundation's findings from the first year of NAN. We will present the summary report of these findings, placing them in the current policy context. Members will be encouraged to share from their own experience of participating in the first year of NAN. During this seminar we will also present our scoping reports on each workstream. This will allow partners to ask questions about workstreams, visualise how they might be implemented in their areas, and give feedback.

- June 2008** **Seminar - Organisational culture**
- July 2008** **Seminar - Devolving budgets**
- September 2008** **Seminar - Neighbourliness and belonging**
- December 2008** **Seminar – Policy update**
The content of this will be finalised closer to the date to ensure it is timely and relevant.
- March 2009** **Summit – two-day event**
This two-day summit will bring all partners together to share and learn from one another’s experiences working on their prospective workstreams. In each of the workstreams, specific projects will be promoted and implemented. During this two-day summit, partners will be able to view presentations from their colleagues as well as from policymakers and experts. Participants will also be able to discuss challenges and opportunities they are facing in implementing their neighbourhood strategies and practice.

6. Further information

For more information, contact any of the Neighbourhood’s team on 020 8980 6263 or:

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The Young Foundation is a unique organisation that undertakes research to identify and understand social needs and then develops practical initiatives and institutions to address them
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