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Well-being and Big Society: A mutually reinforcing relationship?

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The Well-being Programme



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- Healthy eating
- Physical activity
- Mental health
- Social well-being

A mutually reinforcing relationship?



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Volunteering improves
well-being

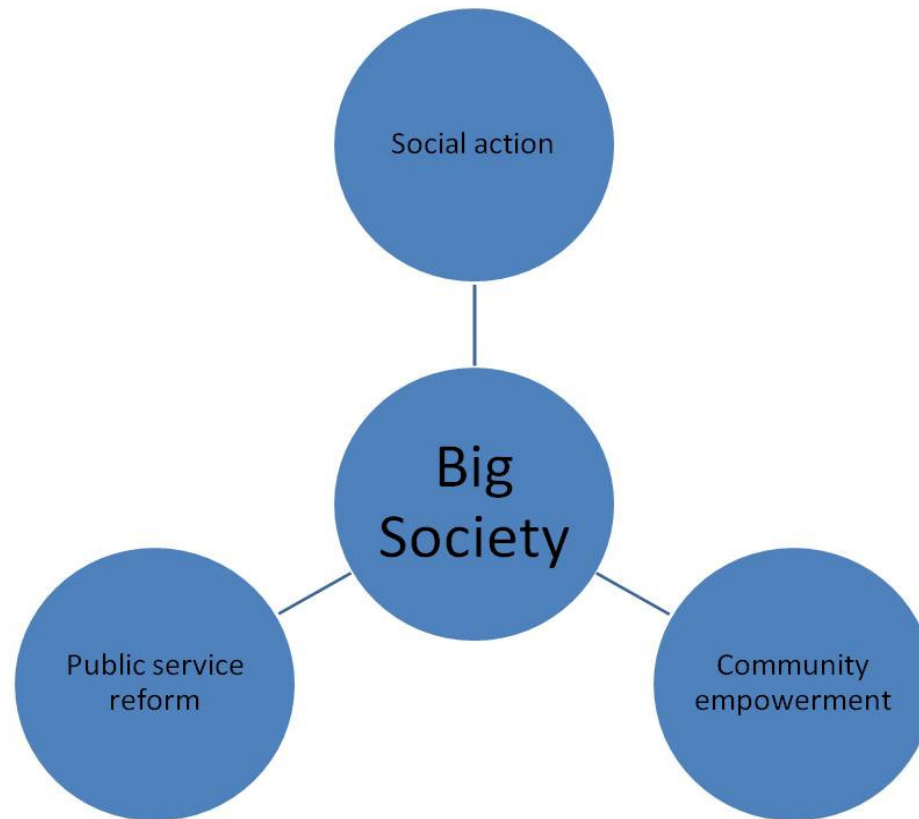


Well-being enhances
volunteering

The policy landscape



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What do we mean by well-being?



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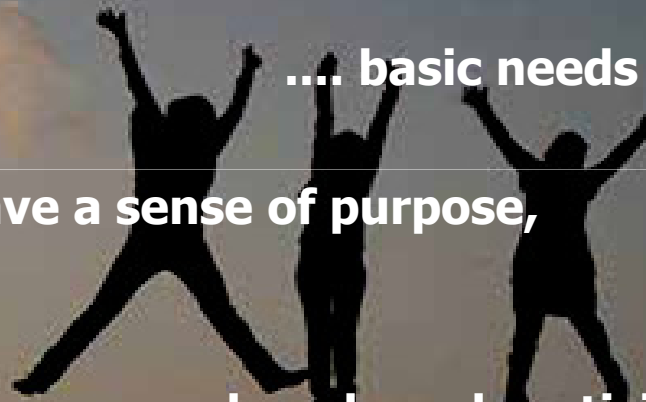
A positive physical, social and mental state

... not just the absence of pain

.... basic needs are met

... individuals have a sense of purpose,

...able to achieve personal goals and participate in society.



Requirements & Principles



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Requirements

- dynamic model
- cope with variety
- robust & reliable
- national & local learning
- complimentary to other evaluation
- comparable data

Principles

- standardised tools for cross-programme measurement
- evaluation as learning
- not performance monitoring or bean counting!
- firmly outcome focussed



The evaluation methodology



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- Standardised questions, tailored for different ages
- Self-reported assessment of well-being
- Measuring distance travelled - data collected at three distinct points
- Complemented by qualitative research



A quick overview: findings



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- Reductions (up to 10%) in significant depressive symptoms
- Life satisfaction up by 0.5 on a 10-point scale
- People are more active, and enjoy their exercise more
- 14% increase in vegetable consumption
- Improved social well-being, especially for volunteers

http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/index/evaluationandresearch-uk/wellbeing_making_big_difference.htm

Well-being & Social Action



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Volunteering has a positive impact on: happiness, motivation, self-esteem, sense of control over life, improved physical health and contact with others:



It's easy to become de-motivated in retirement but volunteering is good...'

'When I'm volunteering I feel cheerful and healthy, it's good to get out of the house.'

'I like to listen... it's good for bringing out ideas, it makes me think. The visits are stimulating... plus volunteering gives me a sense of purpose since retiring.'

Well-being & Community Empowerment



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People who are happy and healthy are more likely to be able and willing to come forward as volunteers.



The activities at Poole Quay Foyer helped residents to feel good about themselves and have greater sense of belonging and community.

Through Cycle Champions, beneficiaries who were new to cycling have become proficient cyclists and real advocates for the sport and for making it accessible for all.

Well-being & Public Service Reform



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Big society also about opening up public services to alternative deliverers and renewed enthusiasm for mutualism and localism too.

- Opportunities for WB providers as social enterprises, co-ops and mutuals
- Need to respond to local needs and context
- Need to consider WB as key element in getting local involvement and support



Making the most of the links



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holistic



complex but more effective

embedded



more sustainable

volunteering focus



improving well-being

...enabling big society...?



Future analysis



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SUCCESS FACTORS

What approaches work best in what context and with whom?

CONTACT

What level of contact is most effective (and efficient)?

LINKS

between different domains of well-being

COMMUNITY

wider (than well-being) impacts on beneficiaries, friends, families, schools and the wider community

Watch this space – and talk to us!



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What do you need to know, as practitioners and policy makers,
to improve well-being in communities?

Headline findings:

http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/index/evaluationandresearch-uk/wellbeing_making_big_difference.htm

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