



Key learning on working with marginalised communities

- **The size and distribution of communities:** The spatial distribution of a marginalised community in a locality will influence the most effective approaches to involving community members in group activities. Small dispersed communities of identity are at greatest risk of exclusion.
- **Universal design vs individual access needs:** Individual access needs should be accommodated whenever feasible, but universal design goes further by removing barriers for target communities as standard.
- **Asset mapping and the spatial model of communities:** Using both asset mapping and the spatial model when planning community development will provide a fuller picture of the communities in a locality and the resources available.

Introduction

Involving marginalised older people in group activities is key to achieving equality. This briefing outlines a new model of working with different types of marginalised communities to engage them in group activities.

Equalities approaches, including both targeted work and universal design for mainstream activities were introduced in our briefing *Working Inclusively to Make Communities Age-Friendly**. Group activities are particularly important because they are generally more effective in reducing social isolation than working with individuals. This was the main type of activity funded in local Ambition for Ageing delivery areas, accounting for over 60% of investments.

This briefing is one of two documents produced to support those working at a neighbourhood level to identify and work with marginalised communities in their area. The second document, *Mapping and working with marginalised communities**, provides a step-by-step guide on using this method and is available on our website (see back page).

Ambition for Ageing is a Greater Manchester level programme aimed at creating more age-friendly places and empowering people to live fulfilling lives as they age.

We do this by providing small investments to help develop more age-friendly neighbourhoods in Greater Manchester in addition to funding larger scale work across the city-region. As a research project, we are committed to sharing the learning we gain from the programme to help influence local, regional and national policy. Ambition for Ageing is part of Ageing Better, a programme set up by The National Lottery Community Fund, the largest funder of community activity in the UK.

Terms we use

Community of identity

A group of people who share a common identity e.g. Bangladeshi people, LGBT people, or D/deaf people.

Co-production

When communities and service providers or professionals work together as equals to create services.

D/deaf

Deaf and uses British Sign Language (BSL), or deaf – hard of hearing but has English as their first language.

Equalities

An approach that is focused on ensuring the rights of all people to be equal is fulfilled. 'Equality' is not the same as 'equity': people may need to be treated differently in order to ensure they have equal outcomes.

Inclusion

A way of working that includes everyone, by making sure that different people's needs are addressed. This term originally referred only to inclusion of disabled people but its use has expanded.

Marginalised

The result of being pushed to the margins of society: excluded or ignored.

Universal design

The design of buildings, products, services etc. to make them accessible to all people regardless of age, disability or other factors.

A model of spatial distribution of marginalised communities locally for use as a tool when planning community development work

The Equalities Board of Ambition for Ageing noticed that **successful ways of working with marginalised communities in local areas were linked to the size and distribution of that community in a locality. This briefing proposes a model of working based on this finding, which can be used as a tool when planning community development work.**

What are the spatial factors that affect ways of working?

These are the relative size of the marginalised group (from **small** to **large**) and its geographic distribution (from **localised** to evenly **dispersed**). In the diagram, these two factors are mapped onto four quadrants. Target communities of identity or experience, at high risk of social isolation, can be mapped onto the four quadrants.

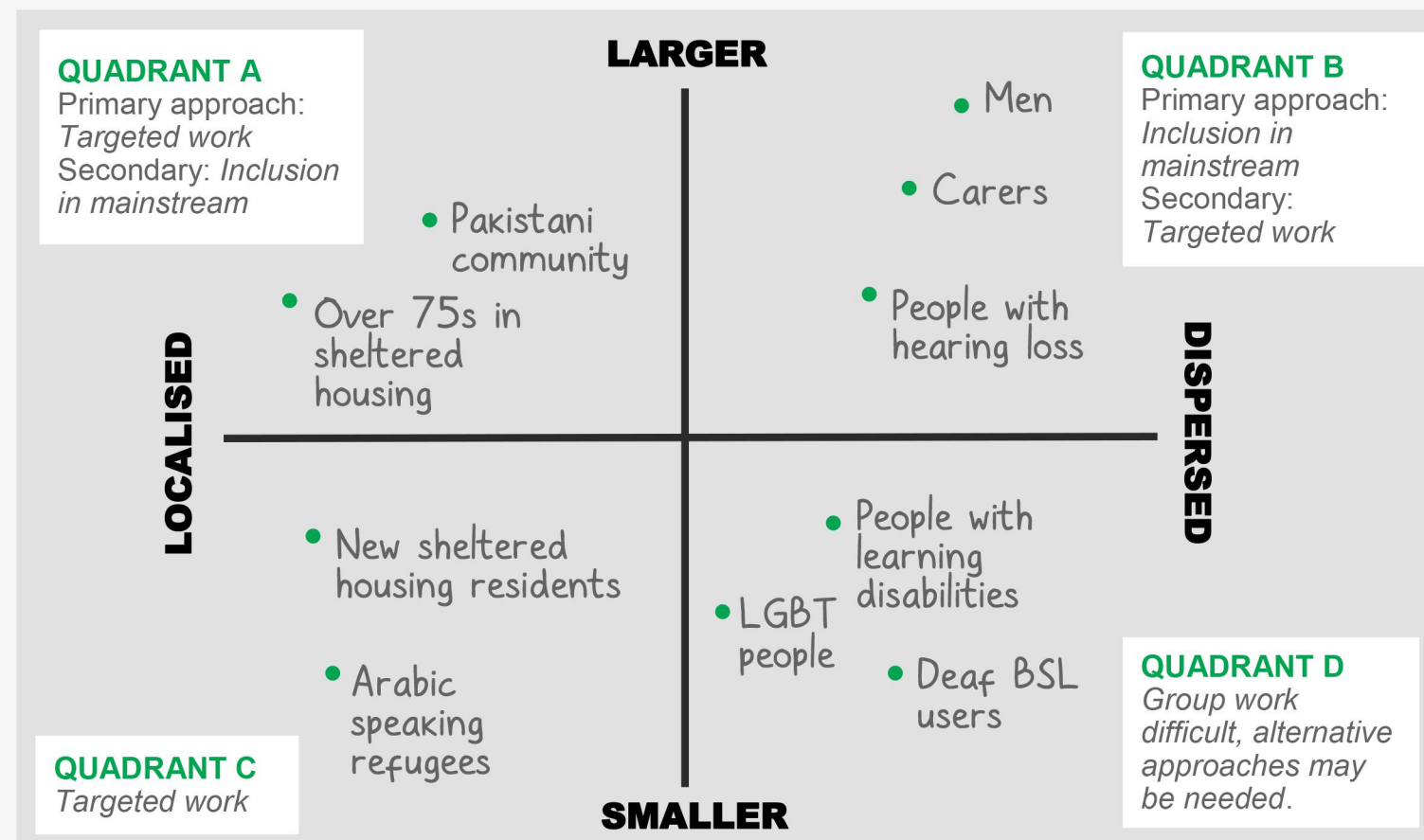
The map will be specific to a particular geographic area, so whilst some communities are likely to be in the same position on the quadrant in all places – for example, men will always be a relatively large and evenly dispersed community - others, such as specific BAME communities, will vary greatly by locality.

How do the four quadrants influence successful approaches?

The two main equalities approaches that relate to group activities are **targeted activities** and **inclusion** in mainstream activities through universal design. The most effective type of approach for different marginalised communities in each quadrant can be linked to its position on the quadrant diagram.

More information about these approaches is available in our briefing, *Working Inclusively to Make Communities Age-Friendly*.

The diagram below uses the model to plot target marginalised communities from an example geographic area. The text below provides approaches for these communities, relating to their quadrant position.



Quadrant A: For communities that have a relatively large but localised population, such as a specific BAME community living on an estate, or people over 75 living in sheltered accommodation, targeted approaches - such as running a culturally specific event or running an activity within a housing scheme for residents - may work best. Inclusion in mainstream activities is also needed for other activities in the locality, but is less of a priority outside the area in which this community lives.

Quadrant B: For groups at risk of social isolation that are relatively large and evenly dispersed, such as carers or people with hearing loss, the priority is to ensure inclusion within mainstream activities - such as hosting events at specific times of day or providing hearing loops. It may not always be achievable to run targeted activities to meet the specific needs and interests of the group across the whole area so it is important that local mainstream activities are accessible to these groups.

Quadrant C: For smaller minority groups that are localised, such as a newer refugee community in an area, or new residents in a sheltered housing scheme, targeted work is likely to be needed to engage sufficient numbers from the community that they feel supported. Inclusion in mainstream activities is also important, but if the numbers attending are small it may prove difficult to retain people until they build relationships with others outside their community of interest or identity.

Quadrant D: It is hardest to identify the group development approaches for communities that are both small and dispersed, such as LGBT people or BSL users, so co-production is crucial. Group targeted approaches may be possible if people are willing and able to travel to meet up, as these communities seldom have local community assets. Inclusion in mainstream events is important in principle but, as with the smaller localised groups, may not meet their needs. As group development approaches may be difficult when working with small, dispersed communities, other approaches might be co-produced with community members such as networking using printed or social media or one-to-one support through befriending or social prescribing.



Universal design vs meeting individual needs

Inclusion is an important principle, and there is always a need to ensure that anyone who wishes to attend a group or event is not excluded from participating.

One difference between taking a targeted approach with a community and inclusion in mainstream activities may be about *how* inclusion is achieved, particularly where universal design would incur costs. An example of this is providing interpreters. If there is a relatively large community that speaks a specific community language (quadrant A, possibly B, or C in some locations) resulting in a high likelihood that people will turn up at an event needing an interpreter, this may be provided as standard. However if the likelihood of this is low (communities in D, or possibly B or C) it may be more appropriate to request that an individual books an interpreter in advance. In both scenarios inclusion is achieved for individuals, either through universal design or through meeting individual access needs.

For public events where people are not required to book in advance the principle should be to anticipate access requirements and make these available as standard. It should also be noted that the Equalities Act (2010) requires service providers to make “reasonable adjustments” to ensure that disabled people can access services. Where it would be difficult to change arrangements to remove a barrier for an individual, such as changing to a wheelchair accessible venue, these requirements should be always provided as standard.

Using this spatial model of communities in practice

Using this model can complement asset mapping when planning place-based approaches to community development. It was developed from research at ward level, where the factors of size and localisation of communities have an important influence on the nature of group work development.

Since the most marginalised communities are least likely to have existing community assets, using asset mapping alone for planning risks reinforcing existing inequalities. This is discussed further in our briefing *Asset Based Approaches and Inequalities**. Completing a spatial model of communities in a locality, using demographic data from the Office of National Statistics and local knowledge about the distribution of communities, can help to identify how local communities use, or don't use, existing assets. The position of a community of identity or interest in the quadrant can then assist in planning an appropriate approach to their inclusion in a community development programme.

*Guidance and further reading

To download a digital copy of this briefing, the workbook – *Mapping and working with marginalised communities Workbook* – or access links to the documents referenced in this briefing, visit www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/equalitiesmodel

This briefing is the product of research and reflection by the Ambition for Ageing Equalities Board, following its 2019 review of the programme from an equalities perspective.



Led by Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisation

St Thomas Centre
Ardwick Green North
Manchester M12 6FZ

www.ambitionforageing.org.uk

0161 277 1000
ambition@gmcvo.org.uk
@afageing