



A User Guide for Community Insights Projects

Using the combined skills and knowledge of VCS and council teams to better understand the local community

November 2020

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to guide us through the necessary steps for successfully running Community Insights Projects.

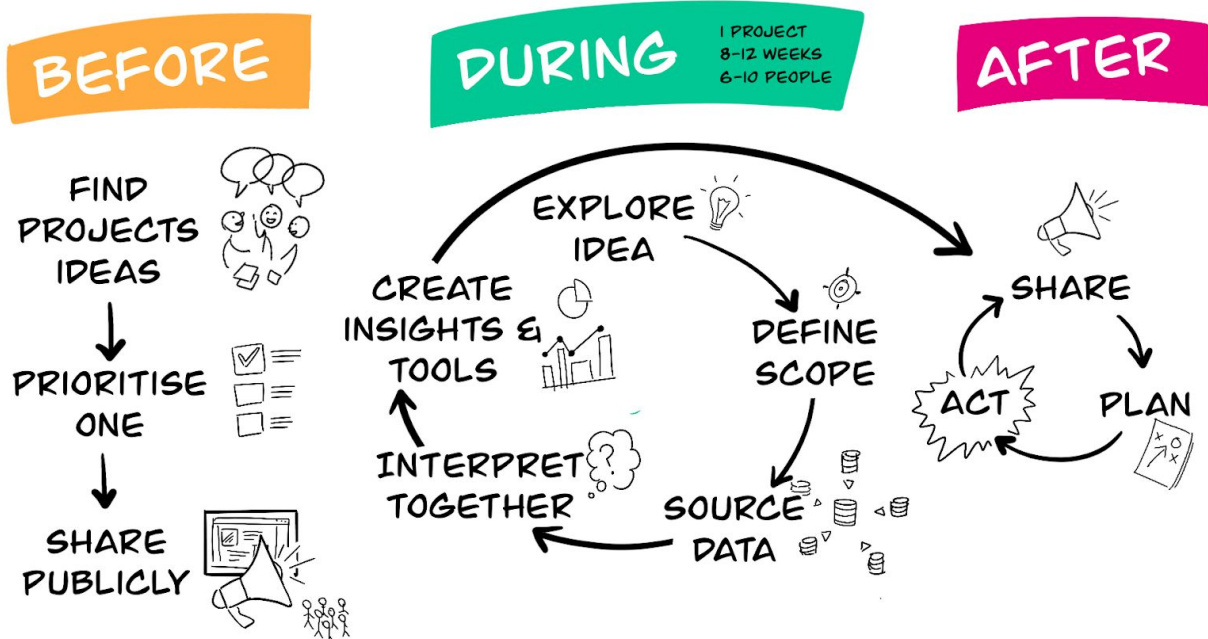
It will need to evolve and be modified as the team learns what works well and what doesn't.

Community Insights Projects bring together VCS staff and council data experts to explore how different types of quantitative and qualitative data can be used to deliver better support to residents during the pandemic and beyond. Combining their strengths, skills and capacity to address shared 'blindspot' issues, planning, analysing and responding as one.

We see this as an opportunity for:

- ❖ Forging new relationships and understanding between people who can turn data into action
- ❖ Reframing the way data is used and exploring new ways to release it
- ❖ Working through real projects together to swiftly create new insights and value

How a Community Insights project works



- ❖ A core team made up of VCS and Council colleagues will source ideas from VCS partners for a Community Insights Project.
- ❖ This will ideally take the form of a question we'd like to answer or a knowledge gap we currently face.
- ❖ We will spend time understanding how we can approach each question, and the skills required to do so before selecting one to move forward with.
- ❖ Once a question is selected, a multidisciplinary group will come together to consider how data can be used to answer this problem.
- ❖ The core team will then work on interpreting data and making it usable. They will share their work with the core team and wider stakeholders.
- ❖ 'Safety Checks' where we consider if what we are doing is compliant with legislation and internal policy are built-in throughout the process.

Collaboration Principles

These principles will enable collaboration and foster communication in ways of working. If we are ever in doubt about how to proceed, we can be guided by these principles. Like the rest of this document, we hope they will be iterated upon to reflect the needs of the programme.

1

Purpose around a common goal

The projects need to feel meaningful to enough community members for a core team and rotating cast of participants to mobilise behind each project.

4

Stronger through our differences

Value each other's differences: the community brings their knowledge of residents and the challenges on the ground to the forefront, while data and legal experts provide the guidance required to make the project happen.

2

Dynamic and time-bound

Having a time-bound and more formal structure allows for more accountability. Yet make this structure feel dynamic by promoting experimentation and flexibility for how we come together to collect these insights.

5

Just enough data, but be bold

Only share and gather new personalised data when necessary and proportionate, but be bold and curious when considering your insights: look to broader, non-local data sets, historical data and to project into the future.

3

From the ground up

Local agendas, not council-led ones, are the core mechanism for bringing forward project ideas. Frontline community members are well placed to see and intuit what is worth prioritising.

6

A spark for further collaboration

Don't stop at the insights. These shared insights can become the starting point for shared action. Publishing these findings or the process for aggregating this data can also support and catalyse other projects across the country.

1st Phase

Setting up your own
Community Insights
Projects team

In this phase, we will gather the necessary people for the core team and set up the common ground for working together.

We will then let the wider local community become aware of our work by sharing a clear outline of how it can benefit them and actively seek their feedback and input into the process.

Step-by-step

1

Step 1: Mobilise a core team

The core team will need to communicate the initiative, gather project proposals and select a project. Most of the core team will be involved in the process of gathering and interpreting data and creating a data solution. Once the research is complete, the core team will communicate the outcomes, share tools and insights.

Each project will require a different set of skills, abilities and expertise; but we think these are the ones that will be needed in most projects:

Core Team:

Facilitator

(2-3 days week, 18 - 25 days per project)
Independent person with a solid knowledge of what's possible with data and agile ways of working. Helps translate between the groups, joins the dots and spots opportunities.

Delivery lead

(1-2 days/week, 15 -20 days per project)
Council staff member to help coordinate product and delivery management, ensuring insights projects are delivered on time and meet the requirements

Data scientist or analyst

(6 - 12 days per project)
2 - 4 staff from local councils and partners. An essential role is data analyst, supported by additional analysts, engineers and processors.

VCS Member Leads

(5 - 10 days per project)
2 - 3 organisations who act as leads for a specific project and shape the work and have a remit to act on the insights.

Communities Representative

(3-6 days per project)
1 council community partner who is involved as needed to support accessing certain VCS or council subject matter experts as required

Advisory panel

(3 - 6 days per project)
6-12 VCS and data representatives with knowledge and access to specific subject matter expertise on a project by project basis (e.g. social worker, domestic violence data reporter etc.)

Complementary Team (as needed in each project):

Contracts and Legal

We will need colleagues who understand what current data-sharing agreements and contracts exist between the organisations involved. (This might be the same team or person as Information Rights).

Information Rights Experts

From inception to completion, we will need to ask questions about the legality and ethics of how we are sharing and using data.

External Data Specialists Depending on which project is taken forward, what sort of data is to be used and what form the solution takes, other data skills may be needed. There is more detail about this later.

Getting to know each other. To successfully work together, we need to learn to communicate and understand the challenges others face by cultivating empathy and an appreciation for the work they do. Whenever possible, we recommend getting to spend some time with different partners (e.g., shadowing their work, or running introductory [exercises](#) to help team members understand how to work together.)

Agreeing on ways of working.

Together, we'll decide:

- How often the team will meet
- Which channels of communication suit the group
- Target timelines for completing the various activities
- When people's time might be required to set expectations

Holding to this mindset will help us identify ways of doing things that everyone can adopt.

2

Step 2: Spread the word

- ❖ Create and publish a landing page with information and an overview of the programme.

Actively share this link in different ways, for example:

- Via social media, frequently sharing updates about the Community Insights Projects and directing them to our landing page
 - Via existing newsletters
 - Via direct email/communication, when we are able to identify a specific case that would be a good candidate for the programme.
 - Other ways of tapping into local networks/recommendations
- ❖ Connect with the local community directly and explain the project, its benefits, what it's about and what they can expect.

3

Step 3: Office hours

Set up 'office hours' to facilitate conversations with VCS who are interested in participating or understanding more about how the project could benefit them.

This is an opportunity to communicate what the project is and the different ways VCS could be involved or benefit.

We might also start generating project ideas by exploring problems and opportunities relating to data.

Remember...

- ❖ **Keep an open mind.** We want to establish a culture where people feel able to express ideas and ask questions; this is what will lead to good solutions. A facilitator external to the council and VCS will ensure this feels like a safe place for its many stakeholders engaged.
- ❖ **Embrace uncertainty.** Accept that not everything will be perfect at first. While the recommendations listed here for engaging people are a good start, we will need to see what works best and iterate from there.
- ❖ **Encourage different types of VCS and partners** to collaborate and join the programme; diversity of thinking is critical to finding new ways of doing things.

What we have achieved

By the end of this phase, we have:

- Identified individuals who will be part of the Core Team. As we run more of these projects and learn from them, we will evolve that core team structure if required.
- Mobilised a core group of diverse partners with complementary skill sets
- Created some materials and a landing page that we can use to explain what a Community Insights project is.
- Broadcasted the creation of the Community Insights Projects across our networks by sharing the landing page more generally via social media, local newsletters and tapping into local community networks.
- Communicated the office hours to organisations that would benefit from the project and informed them of how the outcomes of these projects could be tailored to their specific scenarios and needs.

2nd Phase

Selecting a project

Part 1: Refine project questions and scope data

In the Office Hours, the facilitator will have answered questions from VCS colleagues about the project and heard some initial ideas. Where we have VCS colleagues who are interested in taking an idea forward, we will need to spend some more time scoping each idea.

We will do this through a combination of desk research and 'Scoping Sessions'. In 'Scoping Sessions', a multidisciplinary team comes together to look at how the question could be approached.

The purpose of this is to help us to understand the feasibility of different project questions and the skills and effort that would be required. Understanding this will help us identify which project to take forward.

Step by Step

1

Step 1: Set up scoping session

Organise the scoping sessions as early as possible to give the best chance for people with different skills to attend.

As a minimum, the scoping sessions will need these roles and skills:

| Who | Role in the Scoping Session |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Facilitator | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage everyone to keep an open mindset (we don't want to shut ideas down at this stage)• Guide the group to understand the problem and articulate a question that can be taken forward• Keep the session moving forward in a constructive way |
| VCS colleague who proposed the idea | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share examples of what decisions they would make using the insight generated as a result of this project• Help the Data Scientist and Facilitator understand the challenge that is being faced by answering questions about the issue at hand• Share hypothesis about what they believe may be going on (this might help steer what data we need to look at) |
| A Data Scientist or Data Engineer | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suggest ideas for what data could be sourced and used that the group may not otherwise think of• Ask questions to help identify what data might already be available amongst VCS organisations |
| Subject matter expert who is involved in service delivery in the area | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure the group considers what it's like to be working in service delivery in this area; the reality of how data is being captured or how tools are being used may be quite different to how others think they are being used.• Help the Data Scientist and Facilitator understand the challenge that is being faced by answering questions about the issue at hand• Share hypothesis about what they believe may be going on (this might help steer what data we need to look at) |

2

Step 2: Prep the scoping session

We can investigate the topic before the Scoping Session. Both the Data Scientist and Facilitator should be able to support this.

It would be useful to consider:

- What existing work is being done in this area?
- Are there any obvious data sets? If so, what do we know about our ability to access and use them?

The purpose of this pre-scoping exercise is to have some questions answered for when we go into the scoping session, but we don't want to spend too much effort on researching at this stage.

We also don't want to start coming up with solutions yet as doing so could limit our thinking too early on.

3

Step 3: Hold the scoping session

Bringing people who have experience of the problem area into the same room as Data Scientists to conduct this scoping is critical to the speed of the process. This is a first opportunity to bring together frontline knowledge (qualitative data) together with quantitative inputs from the data scientists.

There are two areas two focus on in the Scoping Session:

Agenda item 1: Dig into the problem and turn it into a question

Some points to reflect on:

- What decisions would the answer to this question inform?
- What do we think we know about this problem?
- Do we have hunches and hypotheses?
- What is the biggest pain point related to this question or knowledge gap?

- Which specific people do we want to be better off in which specific ways because we acted? (Taken from LOTI's data project methodology)
- WHO could do WHAT differently if they had better information? (Taken from LOTI's data project methodology)

Agenda item 2: Data Scoping

We want to understand what kind of quantitative and qualitative data we can use to try and answer the question. This allows us to estimate the effort and skills needed to collect and use this data if we are to move forward with this project idea.

Think broadly about where data could come from. Here are some starting points when considering quantitative data points.

1. Publicly available data sources and research (see Appendix for some ideas):
 - Studies that have produced insights and statistics
 - Open data initiatives that publish datasets
 - Social media and online communities: Twitter, Mumsnet, Mutual Aid groups
 - Statistics released by government organisations; Covid statistics, crime statistic
2. Data held within digital and non-digital systems used by both VCS and Council Partners:
 - Digital: Web analytics, email Inboxes, employee emails, case management tools, excel spreadsheets used to manage services, website analytics, social media accounts
 - Non-digital: Paper application forms, paper case notes, notebooks
 - Informal digital tools: This might include Excel spreadsheets, WhatsApp groups or other systems that departments have created to help manage their work, although they may not be

a tool that is officially maintained or supported by the IT department.

3. Data collected by internal teams in the Council and VCS (for example, if there is a strategy team or commissioned service in this area, they may have collected data for other projects).
4. Ask what other data could be collected:
 - If we don't have data on how many times "No computer" is mentioned in workshops with residents, could we monitor this over a two week period in order to generate some initial data?
 - Can we engage people in some user interviews so that we can have [qualitative data that can sit alongside our quantitative data?](#)

Remember...

- ❖ We can start holding some of the Scoping Sessions even if we are still running Office Hours for people who want an initial conversation.
- ❖ The reason we are doing these interactive sessions rather than a project submission form is so that the person suggesting the project can be supported to articulate it as a question. It also allows data colleagues to gain a deeper understanding of the task and what data is needed.
- ❖ We don't want to start coming up with solutions yet as doing so could limit our thinking too early on.

What we have achieved

- We have helped VCS colleagues articulate the needs and problems they hope this project can solve.
- We have framed the initial problem into a question that a project could answer.
- We have thought broadly about what data could be used to answer this question.

Part 2: Evaluate submitted projects for data safety and skills requirements

Before we can select a project, we will need to identify what additional people and skills would need to be added to the core team in order to make this project successful. Going through a 'Data Safety Check' will enable us to do this.

Step by Step

1

Step 1: Data safety check

As well as allowing us to make a decision about which project to take forward, a Data Safety Check will enable us to evaluate ideas more rapidly in the Explore Solutions stage.

In order to consider how data can answer our question, data analysts or scientists will need to look at the data. We, therefore, need to think about how we can share the data between the organisation who owns it and the organisation (or team) where the data analysts or scientists work. Specifically, we need to consider how this will be compliant with legislation and any internal policies.

Important:

- At this stage in the process, the sharing would only be between two parties and the purpose of the sharing would be for the initial analysis and evaluation of the data *only*.
- Once we determine *if* the data is useful and *how* it can be shared in our solution, we will need to revisit our 'Safety Check'.

We can start by asking these two questions:

1. Is any of the data special class or potentially personally identifiable data under GDPR? (In the Appendix, we list a number of ways to spot personally identifiable data and potential remedies that would allow us to still share the data safely.)
2. Is there information that could be considered confidential for other reasons? (E.g. such as awards of funds not yet known to the public?)

If yes to either of the above:

- Are sharing agreements in place, or could they be put in place so that this data can be shared for analysis (before we know exactly how it will be used)?
- Would a retracted version (i.e. a data with all special/private data removed) still be useful?

Examples of personally identifiable information

Here are some common examples of when we might see personally identifiable or special class data, and what this means for how we proceed.

Disclaimer: These are just some examples; we encourage you to check with your legal team.

| Example | When this might occur | Potential remedy (if no sharing agreement) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Postcodes that give away a specific individual | If the dataset contains a postcode that has less than ten households allocated to it | Remove the instances of these postcodes |
| Postcodes that give away a specific individual | If there are more than ten households in the postcode, but there is other information in the dataset that could allow this person to be identified. We need to be particularly conscious here of the Mosaic effect; could the person we share this data with cross-reference it against data they hold in order to create a 'match'? | Either the postcode or the data that 'gives away' who the individual is would need to be removed |
| Structured personally-identifying information | If we are pulling Name, Email Address, Phone Numbers from a system | We would need to remove these columns |
| Unstructured personally-identifying information (Sensitive or protected) | This can occur when information is captured in free-text. This could be in emails "I spoke to Judith yesterday", or in a "Notes" field on a system "Whilst on | Data analyst can scan for potential personally-identifying information and remove it |

2

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| characteristics) | the phone, we discussed the resident's Aunty who may need support- her names is Grace Smith." | |
| System IDs System identifiers still tie someone back to a record, and so we have to be careful with them. | Pulling information from internal systems and including the 'id' | We should either remove these, or look at a method of encrypting them before sharing If we want to be able to share data with someone who should not access the id but we still want it to 'match' back to our systems, we could consider using an encryption method which generates a new identifier. If we do this, we need to make sure that someone with these technical skills is involved |

Step 2: People and skills

Now that we've spent some time understanding the potential data sources that we can use for a project, we can work out what data skills are needed in order to do so.

Disclaimer: This is not an exhaustive list.

| For this type of data | We would need... |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Gathering information from large public data sources, such as social media (For example, finding every time #Icanhelp is tagged by someone whilst in Central Bedfordshire) | Data engineers who can mine data |

3

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Using data from internal systems or shadow IT systems (i.e. informal IT like spreadsheets) | Someone who knows the data to help analysts understand it in-depth System or Database administrator who can extract information from internal systems |
| Poorly populated or sparse data, or unstructured data | Data engineers who can 'munge' data |
| Collecting new data | Data analysts who can design data collection |
| Internal data sets (i.e. from VCS or Council) | The core team working on analysis will need support from subject matter experts and users. Subject matter experts will need to give feedback on solutions and also help Data scientists and analysts understand where to find data and what it means Input will be needed at the ideation and testing steps |
| External data sets (i.e. public or an organisation who is not a core member in the project) | A researcher or subject matter expert who is up to date with research and data in this area |

Step 3: Share evaluation

For each submitted project, the facilitator will lead on collating and sharing a summary of:

- What work is already being done in this area
- What additional people and skills would be needed for each project idea
- Any considerations that have been identified during the Data Safety Check

This will support the Core Team to make a decision about which project to take forward.

Remember...

- ❖ When we do the Data Safety Check at this stage, we only need to think about sharing between the organisation who owns the data and whoever is going to be analysing the data.
- ❖ For any project, we will need to add further VCS and Subject Matter Expert representation to the Core Team.
- ❖ It's okay if we can't get definitive answers to the Safety Check and Quality. Check yet; we should just be clear about any assumptions that we are making. There will be opportunity to do more in-depth checks on data safety and quality later.

What we have achieved

For each data source/data set that we could create or access:

- We have investigated the main risks relating to compliance and considered how we might overcome them.
- We have identified what skill sets would be needed to obtain and leverage these different datasets.
- We are aware of any major legal or compliance considerations and how we might deal with them.
- We have mapped the work needed to tackle the different projects making it easier for us to select the project we want to move forward with.
- We have used this to inform and evaluate the feasibility of each project and shared it with the Core Team.

Part 3: Select a project

We will decide on a project to take forward and mobilise our additional team members.

Step by Step

1

Step 1: Core Team selects a project

There may be a clear project to move forward with based on resources and data constraints that have come out of the previous steps, but we could also consider these prioritisation criteria:

- How likely are we to be able to get the roles and skills needed to make this project successful?
- Is it a blindspot issue?
- What's the potential impact of learning more?
- Is there existing work we can build on?
- Is the knowledge gap or question very clear- do we know how this new knowledge would be used?
- How relevant would it be across the sector?
- If we think about the conditions that would need to be in place for these insights to be used, are there any dependencies that are outside of our control? For example, would the data only be useful if there's a government policy change or if a new budget is created to fund a programme?

2

Step 2: Mobilise additional team members

- Communicate to the SMEs and VCS partners who are going to join the Core Team exactly what is expected of them.
- Update timelines and share those with Legal and Contracts and Information Rights colleagues- their time will be essential.

3

Step 3: Communicate the selected project

- Communicate what project has been selected and who the team is made up of on the landing page and through other channels. This can also allow additional VCS to express interest in being part of this project.



Remember...

- ❖ We may find that the people that we need to be available to make this project successful are not available. If that's the case, we can loop back and select a different project.
- ❖ The aim of this initiative is to build relationships between Councils and the VCS community; as long as we pick a project that we have the resources to complete successfully, then we are likely to make progress towards this.
- ❖ Make sure that everyone in the core team stays informed and has the chance to participate by sending group updates.
 - These could be an email, followed by text reminders.
 - Tell them what we might need to make different ideas work.
 - Ask what we think might make the project difficult.

What we have achieved

- We have a prioritised project to move forward with.
- We have a team set and ready to go.
- We've shared the prioritised project more broadly.

3rd Phase

During

Part 1: Explore solutions

Supported by the facilitator, this multidisciplinary group comes together to think about how we use both qualitative and quantitative data to create a solution that helps answer the question we identified.

Our solution could be an infographic in a PDF document, a public Power BI Dashboard, a Google map, or many other things.

We then want to validate the feasibility and create some representation of the solution that we can show to people.

Step by Step

1

Step 1: Look at where similar work has been done

When thinking about solutions, are there data analysis approaches and ways of presenting data that we can learn from? Lean on the facilitator for guidance, consult existing patterns and solutions across other LA's and, if it makes sense, ask experts like ODI or Datakind for their thoughts.

2

Step 2: Lead agreed upon qualitative research

In most projects, we will need qualitative research led through 1-1 or group interviews to enhance and provide further detail to our insights. These can take time to coordinate and lead, and we should, therefore, approach this early in the project so that we have these qualitative inputs to bring together just as soon as the quantitative data becomes available.

3

Step 3: Spend some time exploring potential solutions in a workshop with the core team

- Now that we have a better understanding of the GDPR and quality constraints, we are in a better position to make some decisions around what we might be able to achieve and the narrative we can tell. Consider what data we are left with but also what gaps in data we might still have.
- When thinking about what solution we would create, a good question to ask is: "What would we need to see on a screen to enable the action?" (Taken from LOTI's Data Project Methodology)
- Starting with the initial question you are solving for, consider how you will share your solution back at the end of the project. Have your audience in mind and consider what the narrative should tell them and how they will need to use that insight.

4

- Starting with the initial question you are solving for, consider how you will share your solution back at the end of the project. Have your audience in mind and consider what the narrative should tell them and how they will need to use that insight.

Step 4: Evaluate solutions

Consider what skills and time would be needed to deliver what we've further defined.

| If we want to | Do we have/can we get |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Have a solution that makes statistical claims for use in funding or lobbying or marketing | Data scientists who can perform statistical evaluations of data |
| Use data to inform how services are prioritised | Ethics and Legal |
| Create visualisations or dashboards | Data engineers who can visualise data with tools like RShiny or PowerBI |
| Create dashboards and charts | Visualise data with tools like PowerBI |
| Produce an infographic | A visual designer with access to design tools |

5

Step 5: Data Safety Check

How the data will be presented and used matters. It could go from being safe and compliant if shared one way to becoming a risk. As we know more about how the data is potentially going to be used, we will need to reconsider our questions about safety.

Note: The role of this document is not to cover Information Governance around data sharing to its full extent. LOTI have done a lot of work in this field around Data Privacy Impact Assessments and Information Sharing

Agreements. Please see their [six measures for borough data](#) and IG teams to improve data collection and blog on [designing an outcomes-based method](#) for collaborative technology projects.

We need a Data Rights subject matter expert to support with this, but here are some starting points:

| If our solution includes | We need to consider |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Map solutions, particularly maps of user need | <p>If narrowing down to an area- postcodes or any aggregate area with less than ten people living there, this then becomes personally identifiable.</p> <p><i>We are sharing resident data between different organisations. Does the organisation providing the data have the relevant sharing agreements and the basis for processing in place?</i></p> |
| Sharing of 'anonymised' datasets that collate information about residents from different sources | <p>Remove unique identifiers (e.g. NHS number). If it's a system identifier, we may be able to include it, but should encrypt it.</p> <p>If agreements are in place between the two partner organisations (not necessarily the one doing the processing), we could do extra work to share data between them.</p> <p>If people are identifiable either through Mosaic effect, personally identifiable information or system IDs, do the organisations the data is coming to and from have appropriate sharing agreements?</p> <p><i>We are sharing resident data between different organisations. Does the organisation providing the data have the relevant sharing agreements and the basis for processing in place?</i></p> |
| Providing a set of indicators around need- for example a table that showed which demographics were most likely to | <p>If an organisation uses personal data to make automated decisions about what service someone receives and how that person is prioritised, then there are some extra considerations around consent needed under the GDPR . If our solution involves</p> |

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>develop serious illnesses as a result of food poverty</p> | <p>providing a list of indicators around need,, then there's a chance that an organisation could use these indicators to automate decision making around services. Following on from our example of food poverty, an example of this automated decision making would be using software to set cases where the resident was in this demographic to 'priority', without any human checks or intervention. In this scenario, the organisation would have used our insight to help them make an automated decision about the resident (using the resident's personal data). This may be perfectly acceptable if the prerequisite consents are in place, but we should encourage our partner organisations to work with their colleagues in Information Rights.</p> |
| <p>Obviously personally identifiable information</p> | <p>We are sharing resident data between different organisations. Does the organisation providing the data have the relevant sharing agreements and basis for processing in place?</p> |

Remember...

- ❖ The context and involvement of the people who captured the data are important. What datasets represent and where there might be inconsistencies in the meaning of data is important to consider (*"When we were training people, there was a lot of confusion between vulnerable and shielded, so I'm not sure we can rely on that."*)
- ❖ To make room and time for qualitative research which will support us in telling a stronger and more accurate narrative.

- ❖ Even just a simple sketch or an example of a similar solution is much better than just describing to someone what we would produce; try and show people a 'thing' rather than telling them about it.
- ❖ Knowing the warnings, we need to heed alongside a solution is important to help us work out if it's going to be useful. If we say: *"We can give you this information, but you won't be able to put that statistic in a funding application because we can't check one of our data sources"*, then it might suddenly be much less useful.

What we have achieved

We have thought of solutions and:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | We know what datasets would be used to create this solution. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | We've validated their technical and statistical (if relevant) feasibility. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | We've created representations of them that can be shared back to potential users. Within this, we are able to articulate any caveats or limitations about the data or how it will be used as a result of our safety checks. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | We've carved out time for qualitative research and considered how it would support our final solution. |

Part 2: Test and Refine

We want to check that the solutions we come up with are useful to people and used in the way we thought. It's important to get feedback that helps us refine what we have created before finalising it and sharing it more broadly.

Step by Step

1

Step 1: Testing Workshop(s)

The type of solutions being proposed, and examples of these outputs, will inform the shape of the testing workshop. The facilitator will play an important role in helping design these solutions. Here is a [FutureGov guide](#) to understand general best practice on running collaborative workshops remotely.

We should be listening for feedback on how accessible the solution is, as well as substantive feedback about how well the data answers the project question.

- Substantive feedback (e.g. *“This would be even more useful if it also included the number of people who have this issue in the country on average.”*)
- Accessibility (e.g. *“I don’t know how to use PowerBI, so I wasn’t able to look at it.”*)

2

Step 2: Safety check


We’ve already had discussions about how we think people will use the solution. We should check if this matches our understanding of how we thought the data would be used. If it doesn’t, we should update our Information Rights team so that they can raise any concerns.

3

Step 3: Interpret data and create a solution

This will look very different for each project

- The Data experts in the team will need to come together to crunch through the data and create the solution that is actually shared with people at the end of the project.

- 
- Those closest to the qualitative research and other subject matter experts who understand the context and/or where the data has come from should be involved in interpreting the data.

Before the solution is shared more widely, do some final tests:

- Does it behave as expected? (Does the link open? Does the document format properly? etc.)
- Final checks for personally identifiable information.
- Security checks—if the solution is a web page or a protected file, are we confident it is working?

Remember...

- ❖ Even just a simple sketch or an example of a similar solution is much better than just describing to someone what we would produce; try and show people a 'thing' rather than telling them about it.
- ❖ When we show our solutions to those who could benefit from these insights, provide them with any caveats about the information they are being provided. Who are they able to share it with and what are they able to do with it? If we are suggesting a map, but we can't drill down to postcode due to information rights, this may change if it's a useful way of answering our question.
- ❖ We may conclude that the solutions we've considered don't help answer the question we identified for our project. If that's the case, we loop back to the previous stage. Luckily, we haven't yet actually produced the final thing!
- ❖ The compliance checks and testing might feel like we are repeating steps, but the difference is that we now have much more detail about what we actually want to do with the data and how we will achieve that.

What we have achieved

- We understand whether the solution in the shape in which we plan on sharing it back with people will be useful to them.
- We've created a mechanism by which we can test early whether we need to re-evaluate or pivot how we ultimately get to our solution.

4th Phase

After

We want to share the outputs from this project as widely and broadly as possible and to mobilise members beyond the core team to come together and act on the shared insights. We see this as an opportunity to strengthen our relationships together and foster more collaborative participation for how we organise ourselves to support residents.

Step by Step

1

Step 1: Sharing insights publicly

- Schedule a plenary session where the core team involved in the research can share their findings across our borough/region. We will use this as an opportunity to gauge which VCS or council members are interested in using these insights to inform their future work, strategy or resident services. We can see if armed with the new insights, they are interested in considering the problem further and next steps together. We can also use this forum to start socialising the next piece of work we might be looking to prioritise next.
- Publish insights, or if not applicable, share the process or high-level overview of the problem addressed in this project publicly on the main landing page of the Community Insights Projects across the UK.
- Engage a VCS and council member of the core team to co-write a blog post to share learnings and insights from this project and any future plans that are already solidifying around next steps on the landing page and/or on the MHCLG website.

2

Step 2: Project reflections

- Gather feedback individually via a survey or in a group retrospective. Use the learnings from these reflections towards making updates to the User Manual and ways of working on Community Insights Projects.

3

Step 3: Insights to actions

- The Community Insights Team will host a meeting to bring together those who expressed interest in using these insights for future action together.
- This interested group will be provided with a packet with frameworks to plan next steps. This can include prompts for how to turn these insights into actions, or guidance to think through funding and partnerships.

4

Step 4: Update this guide

Think about these questions and update the guide accordingly so that everything we've learnt about how to do Community Insights Projects informs the next one.

- What mechanisms were used to share data?
- What new relationships that were formed, and why did this work?
- What data sources did we use? Did we find any unexpected sources of useful data?
- When completing Data Privacy Impact Assessment for the solution, did anything surprising come up? How did we address it?
- Which new relationships were most effective and can be used as an example for others to follow?
- Did the process of selecting a project work? Would we do more or less of the Data Safety Checks up front?

Remember...

- ❖ Our job on a project as part of the Community Insights Project Team isn't over until we've done our very best to infuse excitement and momentum around our outputs.
- ❖ After each project, it will be paramount to spend enough time reflecting, capturing and evolving the Community Insights Projects model. The User Manual should be evolved and shaped to support our specific VCS/Council culture in order to remain a sustainable initiative that works for us.
- ❖ With the above in mind, when planning the end-to-end project make time for this phase and don't skim on the importance of following through on the above actions.

What we have achieved

We've finished a Community Insights Project (yay!) and:

- We've hopefully learned something and delivered actionable insights to the wider community that can be used to support our VCS and residents.
- We've been able to reflect and evolve the Community Insights Project so that we can support future projects even better.
- We've built new relationships and further solidified and grown others across the borough, paving the way for stronger future collaboration together.

Appendix: Publicly available datasets

| | |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| LionBridge AI | https://lionbridge.ai/datasets/coronavirus-datasets-from-every-country |
| ONS | https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/datalist?filter=datasets |
| Humanitarian Data Exchange | https://data.humdata.org/event/covid-19 |
| Open Data Institute | https://theodi.org |
| Sutton Trust | https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/covid-19-and-social-mobility-impact-brief/ |
| Uk Data Service | https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/get-data/themes/COVID-19.aspx |
| EU Centre for Disease Prevention and Control | https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/cases-2019-ncov-eueea |
| VCSEP Reports | https://vcsep.org.uk/research |
| EU data portal | https://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data/dataset/covid-19-coronavirus-data |
| London Data Store | https://data.london.gov.uk/ |

