

Community Solutions Summary

What the problem is

Communities are part of people getting access to health and social care. They help people have a good life and keep well, and also take pressure off the formal services. This is even more important when there are serious pressures on health and care services, as we are expecting for winter 2022-23.

The biggest impacts come when there are stronger links between the formal care and support services and the wider community supports that people use.

Communities want to help and could do more. Some of the benefits could happen quickly.

But there are unintended barriers in the formal health and care systems.

There are actions that increase opportunities for communities to contribute and reduce the barriers.

- All actions help with one part of the problem and often also take pressure off another part.
- No single action will solve everything.

People in communities know this is complicated and complex, and some changes will take time. But they don't see that as a reason not to make the changes that will bring benefits now.



What you can do to help make it work better

Include people from the community sector when looking at how things are and developing possible solutions, for their ideas and experience.

Use the diagrams from the Community Solutions project to look at what is already working well in your area, and work with others to find the priorities for making things better.

- Think what you can offer.
- How can you make best use of the overall resources and skills in your community?

People often found that there were practical approaches in other areas that had solved, or at least reduced, problems they were struggling with.

- Share what you are doing with people in other areas, so you can learn from each other and come up with more solutions – through Healthcare Improvement Scotland and other learning, and through on-going networks.
- Make it safe and ok to have honest conversations and recognise things could be better.

Remember that the community sector is a large, diverse range of groups and services, and this is a strength. The health and social care systems has people in many teams and roles too. Find ways to communicate and work with people across the range.

Use the links with related policies and developments, such as support for people living with dementia, promoting equalities, Community Wealth Building and skills development.

Make this part of your planning for reducing winter pressures and building economic resilience.