

Measuring and Monitoring Community Empowerment. Results from recent Survey of Local Authorities in the North West

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The research question

- What are the issues facing North West local government and partners on measurement and monitoring of community engagement and empowerment?
- Focus on national indicator set and LAA targets, particularly NI4

The research

- Documentary analysis
- Discussions with regional and central stakeholders
- Telephone interviews with 22 respondents – 16 out of the 22 LAA lead authorities
 - Equivalent to 34 of the 46 (or is it)
 - 6 of the 16 now have NI4, 4 have as local indicator
 - 6 have not included NI4
 - Therefore spoke to 6 of the 9 LAA authorities with NI4
 - And all 4 with NI4 as a local indicator

NI	Theme		PSA21	PSA15	DSO
NI 1.	Cohesive	% of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area		Indicator 1	
NI 2.	Cohesive	% of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood		Indicator 3	
NI 3.	Empowered	Civic participation (participation in decision making) in the local area by under-represented/equalities groups		Indicator 3	
NI 4.	Empowered	% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality		Indicator 4	
NI 5.	?	Overall satisfaction with the local area			CLG
NI 6.	Active	Participation in regular volunteering	Together in PSA, measurement has changed – no. of regular formal vols, plus no. FTE jobs in VCS	Indicator 5	
NI 7.	Active	A thriving third sector			
NI 8.	Active	Adult participation in sport		Indicator 6	
NI 9. to 11	Active	Adult participation in various cultural activities			

Empowerment indicators in LAAs

	LAA agreed indicator England	% Eng	LAA agreed indicator NW	% NW	Local indicator England	Local indicator NW	<i>Totals England</i>	<i>Totals NW</i>
NI 1 get on	87	58%	11	50%	11	2	98	13
NI 2 belong	7	5%	0	0%	10	3	17	3
NI 3 participate	6	4%	0	0%	5	1	11	1
NI 4 influence	85	57%	9	41%	14	4	99	13
NI 5 satisfaction	43	29%	7	32%	14	0	57	7
NI 6 volunteer	44	29%	6	27%	23	5	67	11
NI 7 3 rd sector	61	41%	7	32%	16	4	75	11

Implications of LAA results for empowerment agenda

- Results for PSAs 21 & 15 based on LAs with NIs in LAAs
- Nationally 85 have NI 4 = 57%
- Nine authorities have NI4 in NW = two fifths (41%)
- Plus four have NI4 as local = total of three fifths (59%)
- But see as proxies/'herd' indicators?
- Duty to Involve for rest and CAA
- Therefore is relatively high priority across region

Local government empowerment work

- Nearly all stated was a strategic approach
- Community engagement and empowerment is a priority (££?)
- Wide range of activities:
 - strategic rep
 - 3rd sector development
 - information and consultation
 - neighbourhood governance
- Clear sense of what works

But links between activity and indicators unclear

- Confident doing good work – but will it impact on indicators?
- NB. Impacts and impacts – old debate on service quality v's new measures
- Local versus LA-wide measurement

Are we making a difference?

Empowerment indicators

- Do know that involvement = feelings of influence
e.g. 28% versus 71.5%, Citizens Panels
- But direction?
- Change over time?
- What about everyone else? Information?
What else?

Perception indicators generally

- NI 1, 2, 4 and 5
- Hard to shift and/or unstable?
- Unrelated to performance/reality
- Not clear how volatile as no figures over time
- Therefore what levers?
- Impact of world events/bigger things
- LA working against itself – education, housing, regeneration (e.g)

Wider than NI 4?

- Are the indicators causally linked to each other?
E.g. belonging, get on well, influence?
- Other eggs of definitions and links – ASB and civic engagement, recycling
- Concentrations of indicators around PSA 21
- Go wider than NI 4?

PSA 21 taken as a whole?

<i>No. of authorities</i>	0 local indicators	1 local	2 local	3 local	4 local	Over 4 local	<i>Totals</i>
0 agreed indicators	1		1		1		3
1 agreed indicator	1	2	1		1	1	6
2	6		2				8
3	1	1					2
4	2		1				3
<i>Totals</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>22</i>

Conclusions

- Likely to be continued interest in innovation and ideas
- Two/three-tier areas
- More evidence about perceptions and drivers
- A greater sense of confidence on PSA 21 targets
- Support for NI 4 should link within PSA 21 and broader agendas
- More discussion on mainstreaming empowerment, and managing tensions with other priority agendas