

14-NOW

Springboard 14-Now Programme



Final 3-Year Report



CONTENTS

BACKGROUND	1
WHAT IS 14-NOW	1
THE 14-NOW MODEL	3
WHY WAS 14-NOW NEEDED?	4
THE EVALUATION BEHIND THE REPORT	5
COVID-19	6
14-NOW: REACH AND IMPACT IN NUMBERS	7
14-NOW IMPACT BEHIND THE NUMBERS	8
Wellbeing	8
Social connectedness	9
Empowering young people	10
Volunteering	11
Changing perceptions towards disability	11
Partnerships	12
Next steps for 14-Now	14
KEY LEARNING FROM 14-NOW	16
APPENDIX A: PROJECT DETAILS	18

BACKGROUND

The story of 14-NOW starts with [Fourteen](#).

Fourteen was a programme that aimed to deliver long-lasting social change in 14 communities throughout the UK. Fourteen was granted a total of £3.5 million by Spirit of 2012 over a three-year period, from 2015 to 2018, to increase levels of social inclusion and enhance participation in each of the communities.

The programme was managed by Springboard Opportunities Ltd (Springboard) in two communities of Northern Ireland, and by the UK Community Foundation (UKCF) in the other 12 communities in the UK that were involved in Fourteen. Springboard supported two community partners to deliver activities within Creggan (Old Library Trust) and Monkstown/New Mossley (Monkstown Boxing Club).

WHAT IS 14-NOW?

Following their three-year partnership with Spirit of 2012, Springboard was awarded an additional £450,000 in July 2018 to continue building on the success of Fourteen via a new programme called 14-NOW. 14-NOW focused on consolidating impact in both communities and included a 'new' community Limavady and community partner Roe Valley Residents Association.

14-NOW focused on four main outcome areas:

- ▶ Increased wellbeing
- ▶ Increasing social connectedness
- ▶ Empowering young people
- ▶ Challenging perceptions of disability and enabling people to participate on equal terms

Who is behind 14-NOW?

Spirit of 2012, Funding Partner

Spirit of 2012 work in partnership with other organisations to develop and fund projects that take the London Olympics 2012 spirit forward in the UK. Their goal is to enable people to take an active part in their communities through sport, art and cultural activity, education and volunteering; and by doing so to improve their own lives and those of others.

Springboard Opportunities Ltd, Lead Partner

Belfast-based Springboard Opportunities have been working to promote community cohesion across Northern Ireland since 1992. The organisation is committed to promoting an appreciation of diversity, building capacity and contributing positively to a cohesive, peaceful and prosperous society.

Old Library Trust, Community Partner

Old Library Trust provide facilities, programmes and services directly addressing the social and health needs of people living in the Creggan area and its environs in Derry by engaging residents in a community development process aimed at reducing the inequalities in health by tackling the root causes of poor health.

Monkstown Boxing Club, Community Partner

Monkstown Boxing Club (MBC) provides a diverse programme of activities focused at addressing different social and economic issues in the community. Since 2012, MBC has worked with the hardest to reach young people in Rathcoole and Monkstown, delivering a wide range of programmes aimed at improving educational achievement, creating pathways to employment, building healthier lifestyles, bringing communities together and reducing crime.

Roe Valley Residents Association, Community Partner

Roe Valley Residents Association has 20 years+ of planning, implementing and delivering a range of community initiatives to directly tackle the needs of residents in Limavady and surrounding areas. They work at a grassroots level and have excellent working relationships with community, voluntary & statutory organisations to ensure their service provision is accessible to all.

THE 14-NOW MODEL

14-NOW was delivered through the three community partners described on the previous page; Old Library Trust in Creggan, Monkstown Boxing Club in Monkstown/New Mossley and Roe Valley Residents Association in Limavady. Each of the communities partners have a unique understanding of the needs of their communities, and either delivered activities directly across the three locations, or supported local providers (e.g. community groups) to deliver activities. These activities are broken down in Appendix A and include a mix of short-term events, for example, focused on community cohesion, and longer-term events focused on areas such as; reducing social isolation, increasing wellbeing, improving collaboration, and changing perceptions of disability.

“Fundamentally, at its very heart, it’s a project designed by the community, so I think it’s a very unique project. And it’s breaking new ground.”



Springboard Lead Partner






Limavady

- Links Project – Luncheon Club (2019) 
- Christmas United (2019) 
- Women’s Empowerment Project (2019) 
- Summer Fun and Wellbeing (2019) 
- Older People’s Programme (2019) 
- Christmas Cohesion (2019) 
- Youth and Aged Intervention (2019) 
- Halloween Lantern Parade (2019-2020) 
- Play to Grey (2020 – 2021) 

Creggan

- Community Builder (2019 – 2021) 
- Step Forward (2019 – 2021) 

Monkstown/New Mossley

- Community Builder (2019) 
- In Your Corner (2019) 
- Community Thriving (2020 – 2021) 





WHY WAS 14-NOW NEEDED?

Bringing together communities

Whilst Northern Ireland is considered a post-conflict country, 109 peace walls currently exist in the country, separating predominantly Protestant and predominantly Catholic areas. It was important in the design of 14-NOW that activities were funded in one predominantly Protestant area (Monkstown/New Mossley), one predominantly Catholic area (Creggan), and one area with a mix of both (Limavady), and there was a strong focus in 14-NOW on **bringing communities together** across Northern Ireland. Across the three years of the project, community partners, local providers and participants described a lack of interaction between communities that did not regularly mix together.

“ We are also a village coming out of post conflict. In one of the atrocities during the troubles, in 1993, 8 people were shot dead in a local bar, there's sort of legacy issues there, people are confined to their own spaces and don't really like to venture outside of what they know.

Participant in the first year of 14-NOW ”

For some projects running in loyalist communities in Northern Ireland there was a rise in tension stemming from a series of riots in March 2021. After four nights of rioting in Derry/Londonderry disturbances spread to south Belfast on 2 April, where a loyalist protest developed into a riot involving iron bars, bricks, masonry and petrol bombs. Community partners felt that some young people were influenced to take part by paramilitaries and older representatives in the community, driven by attitudes towards Brexit and the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

“ Every now and again over here a protest pops up. It might have been three weeks ago, a bus was burned down in the community next to ours, just a mile and a half up the road and a double decker bus was hijacked and burned out and that was in relation to the Northern Ireland protocol and Brexit...Those tensions are still here. People are still bitter by Brexit and how it has been handled and it is just a wait and respond.

Monkstown Community Partner ”

Rural isolation

14-NOW projects also focused on addressing social isolation, in part due to lockdowns resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, but in some cases (e.g. in Limavady) this was down to isolation for communities in rural areas. While poverty and social isolation exist in both urban areas and rural areas, those living in rural areas often experience poverty and social isolation differently due to issues relating to geographical isolation, lower population density and the dispersed nature of many rural settlements. Living in a rural area can also exacerbate the effects of poverty and social isolation for certain groups. For example additional costs of living in a rural area such as higher fuel or transport costs can have a greater impact on people on low incomes while some groups such as young people or people with disabilities may experience greater difficulties accessing transport services in rural areas than in urban settings.¹

“ The young people living in that area would be I suppose deprived from access to services unless parents are willing to take them on a car journey to opportunities outside of where they live. There is nothing happening in the area where they live.

Participant in Christmas Cohesion Event in Limavady ”

A lack of opportunities for young people extended beyond rural areas, with project staff reporting that young people often ended up ‘causing trouble’ during the evening due to a lack of local services and things to do.

The impact of poverty

In general, community partners across 14-NOW reported that food poverty and housing issues were also a challenge for their communities. For example, in Limavady, RVRA project leads found that through 14-NOW they connected with families they did not know previously that were impacted by food poverty, and this highlighted the extent of the issue for the partner.

“ They have low self esteem, low self confidence, don't believe they can maintain anything and they have low aspirations so they've given up before they even went into school that day. A lot of them have come from a position of poverty and have gone without breakfast or that support network at home.

Monkstown Community Partner ”

Finally, community partners, providers and participants also identified that alcohol and drug misuse were also a significant challenge throughout the period of 14-NOW, reporting that young people in Monkstown and Limavady could be influenced by paramilitaries.

¹<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/tackling-rural-poverty-social-isolation-new-framework>



THE EVALUATION BEHIND THE REPORT

This report is based on an external evaluation conducted by [inFocus Consulting Ltd.](#) (inFocus) across 2019 to 2021, utilising data from across three annual reports (that can be accessed below).

A mixed methods approach

The evaluation took a [mixed methods](#) approach, combining data from a survey (using mostly existing validated questions or scales such as the ONS wellbeing measures) completed with participants at the start and end of each project, alongside focus groups and key informant interviews conducted by the inFocus team.

Limitations

As with any evaluation, there were also potential limitations with evaluation methods and activities. For example, in each year of the evaluation there was a reliance on questionnaire data collected by staff and volunteers from community partners and providers (which could potentially impact impartiality and the quality of the data), which was mitigated, in part, through the mixed methods approach and triangulation through using both quantitative and qualitative data. There were also a number of limitations effecting the evaluation in the second and third year, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which affected the data collection timings, prevented field visits from taking place, and limited the evaluation team to conducting interviews and focus groups remotely.

[Click here](#)
to access
the 2019
annual end-
line report

[Click here](#) to
access the
2020 annual
end-line
report

[Click here](#) to
access the
2021 annual
end-line
report

COVID-19

The impact of COVID-19

In the second year of 14-NOW crisis struck with the impact of national lockdowns resulting from COVID-19. Already isolated individuals and communities felt even more isolated, and lockdown significantly affected the mental health and wellbeing of 14-NOW participants (both during lockdown, and in the return to in-person activities).

Adapting to COVID-19

In the words of one volunteer coordinator at Play for Grey COVID-19 ‘*threw a huge spanner in the works*’ and 14-NOW partners and providers had to adapt, and adapt quickly, to the situation as safety considerations necessitated re-visiting project plans and coming up with alternative project provisions. In many cases, this meant moving activities online, from regular sessions through to social events and check-ins. 14-NOW partners and providers also ran essential services, such as providing care packages, activity packs, and hot meals, directly to their communities. Others created paper-based materials or provided other physical materials such as seeds, cooking ingredients and plants to use at home. This made for an often particularly creative mix between virtual activities and the use of physical materials. The online activities often required additional work from 14-NOW projects to support participants to get online, sometimes for the first time, through training and providing hardware such as dongles, computers or tablets.



We started a community response team in Glack for our older people. We did that on a voluntary basis, just to engage with them. If someone needed something from the shop or a prescription, or they just needed something, they could contact the community response team. We would link in with them every other week by phone call, to make sure they were okay or check if they needed anything.

Glack project provider



Other impacts of COVID-19

It should be noted however, that there were more positive aspects to emerge from the pandemic for 14-NOW partners, providers and the communities they serve. For some providers, an increased awareness of their work in communities during the pandemic led to increased attendance/registrations. For other providers, digital activities opened up a new way of working with participants, and the potential for connection in different ways that they intended to continue with after the COVID-19 pandemic.

14-NOW : REACH & IMPACT IN NUMBERS

Overall 14-NOW was most successful in generating outcomes across the areas of **increasing wellbeing, increasing social connectedness** and **empowering young people**. On this page we look at some of the key outcomes in numbers from across the three years of 14-NOW, before digging deeper over the next sections:

11,000

Participants were reached directly by 14-NOW in communities across Limavady, Creggan and Monkstown/New Mossley.

96%

of all participants in year 3 reported that they had experienced an increase in their self-esteem and confidence as a result of taking part in their 14-NOW project. This was 79% in year 2 and 76% in year 1. This was mirrored too in an increases in the ONS wellbeing measures between the start and end of each project across the three years, where wellbeing scores in each case started lower and finished above the average in Northern Ireland and the UK as a whole.

94%

of participants reported that taking part in their project had made them feel a lot better or better about their life and future, which was also consistently high across the three years (93.2% in year one, 81% in year two and 94% in year three).

97%

of participants in year 3 felt they would be more likely to support their community in future because of the project.

72%

of participants across the projects felt that their project/activity had given them a voice in their community (this was 66.7% in year 1 and 86.2% in year 2).

30%

was the average increase between baseline and endline across the three years, where participants felt they could challenge the ideas and perceptions of their community.

44%

was the increase between baseline and endline in Limavady in year 3 that increased their engagement in the community. This increased across all projects over the three years.

14-NOW IMPACT: BEHIND THE NUMBERS

In this section we look at the positive impact that 14-NOW had in communities around Northern Ireland, starting with one of the most common outcomes emerging from 14-NOW; **increases in the wellbeing of participants**.

Increases in the wellbeing of participants

The evaluation of 14-NOW used the four ONS wellbeing measures with participants at the start and end of each project, and as can be seen in the table below, wellbeing scores in each case **started lower than the national average and finished above average levels in both Northern Ireland and the UK as a whole** (with the exception of anxiety, which decreased, representing a positive result for projects).

	Life Satisfaction		Life is Worthwhile		Happiness		Anxiety	
UK Average 2021	7.4		7.7		7.3		3.3	
NI Average 2021	7.6		8.0		7.5		3.1	
	Baseline	Endline	Baseline	Endline	Baseline	Endline	Baseline	Endline
14 NOW Year 1 Average	5.9	8.6	6.3	8.5	6.1	8.5	4	2.1
14 NOW Year 2 Average	6.8	8.2	6.9	8.2	6.7	8.2	3.9	2.5
14 NOW Year 3 Average	6.6	8.1	6.6	8.3	6.3	8.1	3.9	3

This increase in wellbeing from the surveys was **also echoed in data from focus groups and interviews** from across the three years, which showed increases in physical health (e.g. improvements in exercise and nutrition), mental health (e.g. improving coping mechanisms, feeling less isolated – particularly during lockdown) and increases in self-esteem and confidence (including gaining a more positive outlook on life and feeling supported to leave their comfort zone).

Partners and providers across 14-NOW did see a negative impact on wellbeing from the isolation of participants during COVID-19 lockdowns, and from tensions within some communities due to the riots described earlier in this report. However, there was particular focus from staff and volunteers within projects to address this, for example, participants from the Community Thriving project reported that the support they received from project staff during the pandemic was helpful in reassuring them that they still had a support system in place, even when venues were closed.

Increase in social connectedness

Another key outcome from 14-NOW, that replicated across the three years, was an **increase in social connectedness** in participants across communities that in many cases were already isolated prior to the impact of COVID-19 lockdowns. This was a specific focus of the Community Builder roles in Creggan and Monkstown, but could be found across all projects over the three years, even when it was not a focus. For example, in each year of 14-NOW there was an increase from survey baseline to endline in relation to:

- ↑ the extent to which participants felt lonely,
- ↑ whether people from different backgrounds got on well in the community,
- ↑ how proud participants felt of their contribution to the community, and
- ↑ how engaged they generally felt with the local community.

The increase in social connectedness included **bringing people together from predominantly rural areas** so they could feel less isolated, for example, in the Summer Fun and Wellbeing project in 2019, partners and providers suggested that young people in Limavady living in rural areas are isolated and so, in the summer are unable to socialise with other children. This led to their spending a lot of time alone or at home because there are no activities that they can access easily. 14-NOW projects provided an opportunity for children to socialise with other children from their community in a safe space and children formed new friendships and developed existing ones throughout the project.

Respondents to the evaluation across the three years described **mixing together with people from different areas/estates for the first time** and this was one of the main results to emerge from the shorter-term events (the Halloween Lantern Parade, Christmas Cohesion and Christmas United event – see Appendix for more details). Responses from the events also highlighted the importance of forming of a safe-space to make these connections, for example, for one single mother the events were somewhere safe where she could relax, have a chat, feel safe and have the kids play. She felt this wasn't the case where she lived.



The **forming of friendships, across communities and within them**, was also a theme that emerged across the three years, and this hinted at longer-term connections between people. For one 14-NOW participant it was about developing friendships with people who they didn't usually interact with, from outside of their area.

“ Ladies that you wouldn't imagine speaking together and having a friendship, even myself. As I live locally, I see them in the shops or out walking together outside of the group. People that you never would've seen, having those friendships and are just trying to expand their networks locally. The conversation with them isn't forced now. They know more about each other's backgrounds and interests and it's been nice to see that too. ”

Project Lead, Play to Grey

Increase in social connectedness

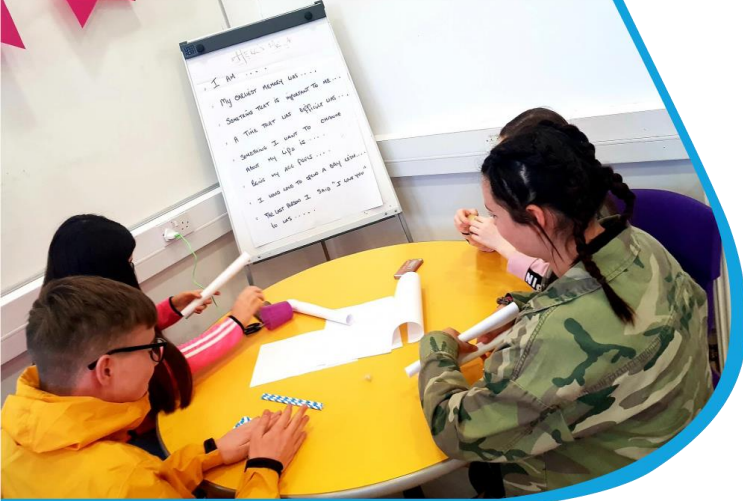
Across the three years there was also evidence of empowering young people taking part in 14-NOW projects (for projects where this was a focus). This involved activities focused on facilitating young people to have a voice, be inspired to lead activities and be an active member of their community. For example, when measured in the endline survey a significant majority of participants each year **felt their project/activity had given them a voice in their community** and **felt their voices were heard by the community**.

Interviews and focus groups across the three years highlighted different ways in which young people became more empowered as a result of the project, for example, in year 3 of both the Play to Grey and Community Thriving projects, young people helped to provide packages to older people in the community during COVID-19, and they and the project leads noticed a positive change in perception of the young people in the wider community as a result of their more active participation.

“ The young people were more confident, so they were able to challenge their peers whenever they went out on the streets. They were able to signpost if someone was drinking too much and so they are looking out for each other. They have started to have a positive outlook on their community. To the community I think they are seen as positive young people now, helping with the clean ups and food parcels. It really has changed the perception of others in the community in a positive manner. ”

Project Lead, Community Thriving

While the proportion of participants that felt they could challenge members of the community did increase each year, it did end up at lower levels in comparison to other survey results (e.g. it was 54% at the end of the first year). It was felt by one respondent that this may be, in part, a result of young people in one of the projects being influenced by older representatives of paramilitaries to 'get out on the street and fight', and it could be difficult to challenge these individuals. However, away from the survey results, in focus groups and interviews for the evaluation, there was evidence of young people growing in confidence in their community (see quote above), particularly through recognition of their support to communities during COVID-19. Other examples included participants at Play to Grey in Limavady becoming more empowered through a project supporting them to participate in lobbying activities, including talking to their local council about improvements to accessibility across the community.



Volunteering

Encouraging volunteering within the 14-NOW communities was a particular focus of the year two and three one-off events, however the longer-term projects also promoted opportunities for volunteering when COVID-19 lockdown measures allowed. For example, the Step Forward project partnered with a local county park to provide openings for their users to assist in gardening, litter picking and taking care of specific areas within the park. Although the project lead reported that the numbers of volunteers at the park have slowly reduced, at the time that the opportunity was created, it gave members of the community an opportunity to be outside and socialise, which many highlighted as a key need for them after many of them had self-isolated due to fears of the pandemic.

“ I feel more part of the community and have met a lot of new people. I would love to volunteer with the project eventually.

Participant in the Step Forward project ”

Perceptions towards disability

Changing perceptions towards disability was not a specific focus for all the 14-NOW projects and was primarily aimed towards those projects which worked directly with disabled people. For example, Step Forward in Creggan focused primarily on working with people who have a medical condition and aims to support them as part of the existing Long Term Conditions Management project. In general, across projects, while there were increases between baseline and endline surveys relating to participants taking a more positive view of disabled people, this was more challenging to connect back to 14-NOW projects (and respondents identified that they already felt positive towards disabled people at the start of the project), although there was some evidence from focus groups and interviews in relation to this area (as shown by the quote below).

“ I am really impressed that there are people with these conditions that are trying to help themselves. There are people in their 80s going and it's so good for them and their mental health

Participant in the Step Forward project ”

Creggan Community Builder : Case Study

The primary aim of the Community Builder project in Creggan was to develop partnerships and collaborations with other organisations within the community to develop opportunities and promote community cohesion. An additional aspect of this project was to work with Sean Dolans GAC to increase capacity of young girls and women and to encourage them to participate in Gaelic football, within both school and community settings. The club has reported that there are less opportunities for young people to participate in rural areas compared to urban areas due to differences in funding and the number of people playing the sport. Therefore, they are continuously aiming to close this gap and inspire young people and the local community to take part and engage in Gaelic football.

Sean Dolans GAC empowered young girls and women through Gaelic football. The club delivered physical education sessions in schools to provide an introduction to the sport and also hosted sessions within the club for those looking to develop within the sport. Due to the club delivering a high number of sessions within schools, they were unable to move these activities online as there were concerns for the organisation in planning how this would be facilitated with school staff. The staff had concerns that the numbers of participants would decrease when activities started up again, however a staff member at the club reported that they had likely increased.

Sean Dolans delivers sessions in both the local primary and secondary schools, which they report “keeps the project going” as once the girls have left primary, they have an opportunity to continue playing the sport. The girls’ teams are reported to be doing particularly well, and their success is being promoted within the county:

“Between the under 11’s, under 13’s and the under 15’s, the girls have ended up participating in five county finals which is unbelievable. The girls are the talk of the county” - Sean Dolans staff member

In addition to providing opportunities to participate, the older girls within the club are also able to take part in refereeing and coaching courses which often include links to other qualifications such as First Aid. Furthermore, some coaches from the club now coach a women’s team at Ulster University in the hope that it will help their girls and young women to be inspired to go to university and continue to play the sport.

In 2011 the Sean Dolans clubhouse was burned down after an arson attack, which meant that between 2011-2016, there were no children involved in any participation within the club. The Old Library Trust highlighted that the 14-NOW funding has supported the club to build up their infrastructure in delivering club activities to young people again and supported them in providing more opportunities within the community. A staff member at the club further highlighted that “unfortunately it (the funding) has come to an end which is obviously where we will suffer. Without that funding we wouldn’t have created the opportunities that we’ve been able to create”.

Partnerships

Finally, there was evidence across the three years of 14-NOW (and in the months directly afterwards) of **partnerships forming between organisations** that could lead to longer-term impact. In some cases, these partnerships were formed more intentionally. In Creggan, a community forum was created which developed partnerships with other key actors in the community (such as other delivery organisations and schools), helping to ensure that clubs providing activities to the same target group were not delivering on the same days. Young people therefore have the opportunity to take part in as many different sessions as they would like, without having to worry about conflicting schedules.



The community forum is still going. There were no connections between community organisations before the forum and so now our focus is on trying to work together rather than competing.

Community Builder, Sean Dolans staff member ”

Play to Grey was a multi-partnership project involving a steering group, which empowered organisations within the local area to collaborate and build relationships with each other to better meet the needs of all members of their community. In years two and three, the partners were looking to host an inter-community event with various organisations to promote social cohesion, however this could not take place due to the pandemic. Longer term partnerships and initiatives also emerged from the shorter-term events, for example, the Christmas Cohesion event acted as a catalyst for the formation of a youth club in Glack.



NEXT STEPS FOR 14-NOW

This section explores what happened next following the end of 14-NOW. As shown below there are clear indications that community partners are continuing to build on 14-NOW, with others seeking funding to continue with activities.

Roe Valley Residents Association

- ▶ A Youth and Community Hub in the town centre has been developed as a result of the 14-NOW funding, in response to the needs faced by the local community.
- ▶ The activities for Women in Limavady, Dungiven and Greysteel have been able to continue due to accessing new funding opportunities.
- ▶ Funding from the Mental Health Fund from the Department of Health has enabled a new mental health project to be developed in Limavady for adults aged 18-30.
- ▶ The youth projects are being sustained in Glack and Burnfoot due to registrations with the Education Authority Northern Ireland (EANI).

Old Library Trust

- ▶ The projects were sustained for an additional three-month period. The partner is continuing to seek funding for sustainability, however, they have found that there are limited opportunities.
- ▶ There is a new facility in development at the Sean Dolans GAC which aims to be completed by September 2022. The facility is an extension to the existing changing area and will include a gym and full size indoor 4G Gaelic pitch.
- ▶ Step Forward are expanding the demographics of individuals and members within the community that they were able to reach during 14-NOW. The project is in discussion with a number of groups and they have attended seminars and workshops with the North West Migrant Forum and wider Eastern European Community.

Monkstown

- ▶ Monkstown Boxing Club have been awarded £143,000 by the Department of Education to continue their delivery of the youth education programme, 'In Your Corner'. (<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/news/mcilveen-announces-funding-education-provision-newtownabbey>)
- ▶ The project lead has been recognised for their work in the community through gaining an MBE.

Play to Grey: Case Study

As part of an inter-community partnership, the Play to Grey project worked with a diverse range of beneficiary groups, from young children to older residents. Between the partnership, they hosted a number of one-off events to promote community cohesion in addition to longer-term activities.

As part of their longer-term service delivery, the Play to Grey group worked with a group of young people and adults with a disability through the Reach project to provide them and their families with activities that they wouldn't otherwise have the opportunities to take part in. For example, the project manager of this group highlighted that they have been able to use the 14-NOW funding, along with another source of funding, to host a summer residential, to take the participants on public transport to visit key landmarks in Northern Ireland. They have also supported participants to increase their 'voice' in their community through lobbying activities, specifically in regard to accessibility of local attractions. These types of activities, in particular the summer residential, also gave the families/carers of the participants a period of respite from care giving, which they do not usually have.

"I actually bumped into one of the relatives just outside of work and she approached me in the street, and she said it's unreal the work that the Reach project's doing for her sister. She said that she would have been attending a day group and that would've been the only support mechanism she would have had and now she's getting the support of meeting other young people and other people her age in the Limavady area." - Project lead, RVRA

In addition to their regular activities, the reach group also partnered with other organisations working with young people to increase awareness of individuals with disabilities and removing barriers.

The final year of the 14-NOW funding saw this group starting to take part in lobbying activities, as a result of observing and experiencing challenges when taking part in day trips and excursions, for example, limited access to popular tourist attractions.

RVRA were able to continue to fund the Reach group past the 14-NOW programme until March 2022, and the group are continuing to explore other avenues of funding to continue project delivery.

KEY LEARNING FROM 14-NOW

This section outlines some of the key learning that emerged from the evaluation of 14-NOW, with a particular focus on learning that could influence similar programmes in future. This included:

- ▶ Working with organisations ‘on the ground’ that **understand the needs of communities** is a key strength of 14-NOW and across the evaluation, partners and providers were able to clearly articulate the (often particularly localised) needs of their communities and how activities were addressing these needs (evidenced by this evaluation also). This became particularly apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic, where projects across 14-NOW included activities that were quickly and very specifically tailored to the requirements of their participants.
- ▶ This also highlighted a key part of the 14-NOW funding model both during and prior to COVID-19, as identified by Springboard and partners, in relation to the **flexibility to adapt funded activities**. For example, not needing to go back to a funder with a drawn-out process for making modifications, as it is understood that partners will know what’s best for communities ‘on the ground’. For Springboard this was also important outside of crisis response, in general enabling projects to take a dynamic approach and change things that were not working (rather than being stuck with any activities that were less effective for the 3 years because they were in the organisation’s original funding application).



It was fantastic to be a part of (14-NOW). It was more of a flexible fund that we were able to tap into as well. So, they've been supporting us for the last two years in relation to adults with learning disabilities. It came at a time when there wasn't a lot of funding out there for disability unless it was a big National Lottery fund or something like that.

Project manager/stakeholder, Play to Grey



- ▶ However, for Springboard this **flexibility does need to be balanced** with ensuring changes to activities stick to the ‘spirit’ of the original application (e.g. focusing on the same broad outcomes) and following processes that ensure that there is accountability for the funding, including quarterly reporting and partners and providers implementing surveys to feed into the evaluation. Springboard found it important to set the expectations in relation to these processes at the start of 14-NOW. In particular, while challenging for the capacity of some projects, from an evaluator’s perspective, the linking of the completion of reporting forms and survey data to funding did lead to larger sample sizes and richer data than inFocus is familiar with and could be considered for other funding programmes in future.
- ▶ For Springboard, another key learning relating to the above, was the importance of **ensuring that community organisations are at the right stage in their development to follow monitoring processes** such as those described above, for example, some may be 100% volunteer-run and may require more capacity-building support.
- ▶ All projects have, as highlighted in the COVID-19 section above, adapted quickly to the changing needs of participants and moved activities online. Many of the partners and providers interviewed are **likely to continue using a digital approach as part of their activities**, finding that it has helped them to connect with participants in a different way and potentially reach more people.

“ Without a doubt, the ways in which we work and engage and connect have radically changed. It does extend your reach and it’s all about that human connection, not necessarily human touch. The more you use [digital], the more you understand the capacity of it, and the ability to connect it and the ability to shape it to what you need. ”

Springboard Staff Member

- ▶ In years 2 and 3 of the evaluation, projects also highlighted their learning in relation to **barriers engaging with participants**. This included dealing with the stigma/attitudes of the wider community, mental health issues (particularly during the pandemic and it’s aftermath), transport for individuals from rural communities, digital skills for those engaging online, and the time and capacity of overstretched teams (during COVID-19 in particular).
- ▶ One change Springboard would like to make to the project in future is a **further emphasis on sharing learning between partners** and identifying transferable knowledge between communities. There was some shared learning between partners in the first year, particularly as the partners knew each other from the Fourteen programme, but then this was less of a focus in years 2 and 3 with the COVID-19 response taking priority and Springboard finding that ‘Zoom fatigue’ was taking hold.

APPENDIX A – PROJECT DETAILS

Community Events

Project	Provider	Target Audience	Type of activities	Total no. of participants
Christmas Cohesion	Glack Community Association (Limavady)	This event was focused on young people aged 5-14, however it involved all community members.	This event took place in the first year of the programme and involved a Christmas celebration event with children and their families to promote community cohesion.	Year 1: 250, 6 volunteers
Halloween Lantern Parade	Roe Valley Residents Association (Limavady)	Pre-event activities focused on children aged 5-14, however the event was for people of all ages.	This was a multi-partnership event that took place in year one and two. The project involved the local community to put together a parade which ended in a fireworks display.	Year 1: 450, 30 volunteers Year 2: 430 participants, 18 volunteers
Christmas United	Roe Valley Residents Association (Limavady)	This was a cross-community event involving children and young people aged 5-16 and older people aged 60+.	This event involved a Christmas dinner for older members of the community to get to know others in the local area. A second dinner was hosted for young people with entertainment to increase community cohesion.	Year 1: 280, 30 volunteers

Longer-term projects

Project	Provider	Target Audience	Type of activities	Total no. of direct participants
Play to Grey	Roe Valley Residents Association (Limavady)	This partnership project between the areas of Greysteel, Burnfoot, Dungiven, Glack and Limavady targeted 7 demographic groups (Pre-school/Parents & Toddlers, Children and Young people (4-18 years old), Women (25 years+), Men, Older People, Volunteers, Residents with a disability).	This project aimed to provide services which promoted inclusion, well-being and social connectiveness. A specific focus of Play to Grey was to engage all members of communities, particularly in rural areas where there is often a limit to services.	Year 2: 630, 42 volunteers Year 3: 3,563 (including 2995 from online project) 40 volunteers
Community Builder	Old Library Trust (Creggan)	The Community Builder engaged with women and girls aged 8-25 years old within schools and the community.	This project involved promoting communication and collaboration between different organisations and groups in Creggan. Particularly, the project worked with Sean Dolans GAC to increase participation and opportunities for young women to take part in Gaelic football.	Year 1: 90, 4 volunteers (combined with Step Forward) Year 2: 180, 3 volunteers Year 3: 114, 14 volunteers
Step Forward	Old Library Trust (Creggan)	Target group was ages 26+ who live with a life limiting, long term illness, health problem or a disability.	This project focused on people in the local community in Creggan who are living with a long-term medical condition. Themes of social connectedness and reducing isolation were a specific focus of the delivery, and they worked to bring people together in a positive space.	Year 1: 90, 4 volunteers (combined with Community Builder) Year 2: 2,305, 3 volunteers Year 3: 227, 12 volunteers
Community Thriving	Monkstown Boxing Club (Monkstown/ New Mossley)	Community Thriving support young people aged 11-16 years old and adults aged 40+ years old from New Mossley/Monkstown communities.	Community Thriving worked with a diverse range of target groups within the community, developing activities which were tailored to the needs of each audience. The project also provided additional mentoring sessions to promote positive wellbeing and support those with low mental health.	Year 1: 100 Year 2: 180, 42 volunteers Year 3: 156, 15 volunteers



Project	Provider	Target Audience	Type of activities	Total no. of direct participants
Youth & Aged Intervention	Glack Community Association (Limavady)	Two stranded programme Strand one, delivery of weekly youth activity for children aged 5-14 years. Strand two, Volunteers run a monthly social for older people.	This programme gave young people an opportunity to engage in team building activities to support the development of self-esteem. It also ran events for older members of the community to increase social cohesion.	Year 1: 90, 13 volunteers
Older Peoples Programme	Benbradagh Community Support (Limavady)	Over 55's adults, focus on increased participation of older females. Social and rurally isolated people.	This programme worked with existing health and wellbeing initiatives to strengthen community participation and improve general wellbeing amongst adults.	Year 1: 35, 2 volunteers
Links Project – Luncheon Club/Youth Group	Burnfoot Community Association (Limavady)	Young people (aged 5-18) Older residents (aged 50+).	This activity brought together older residents with the aim of reducing social isolation. The youth group aspect of the project sought to empower young people through personal and social development activities.	Year 1: 70, 2 volunteers
Women's Empowerment Project	Roe Valley Residents Association (Limavady)	Women aged 25-55 years, particularly 55+.	This project looked to promote health awareness and best practice for women.	Year 1: 30, 3 volunteers
Summer Fun and Wellbeing	Roe Valley Residents Association (Limavady)	The programme aims to engage with 266 children and young people aged between 4 and 18, 10 families and 60 older people.	This programme was a collaborative project providing a range of well-being initiatives to people living within the areas of Limavady, Burnfoot, Dungiven, Glack & Greysteel.	Year 1: 296, 16 volunteers

