

# What Works Community

Local Government Initiative 2020

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## What Works Community: Local Government Initiative

Get the help and support  
your city needs to achieve  
breakthrough results in  
tackling or preventing  
homelessness

The **What Works Community: Local Government initiative** provides unparalleled expertise, capacity building, and peer connections to give local authority leaders the tools and techniques needed to tackle their toughest homelessness challenges. Launched in 2019 with three local authorities from around the UK, the initiative partners with local leaders to determine needs and provide tailored support to help local authorities achieve transformational changes in addressing homelessness.

Starting in 2020, the What Works Community: Local Government initiative will expand to support **30 local authorities** across the UK with expert assistance learning in the fields of behavioural insights, design thinking and data-informed decision making. The programme offers local authority leaders the opportunity to strengthen a culture of continuous innovation and to enhance their use of evidence and data to tackle homelessness by focusing on 'what works'.



## The Opportunity

Now more than ever local leaders need support to think big, use evidence, be bold, and uncover and test inventive and shareable solutions.

Across all levels of government, in homelessness and beyond, the Centre for Homelessness Impact has engaged with ambitious leaders who are committed to using evidence and data to end homelessness for good and improve life-chances. But they are fighting an uphill battle against stretched resources, lack of specialist expertise and a scarcity of space to think creatively about old problems.

The What Works Community: Local Government initiative tackles this challenge head on. In collaboration with three expert partners (Johns Hopkins University, IDEO and the Behavioural Insights Team), the initiative gives participating local authorities the space, focus and expert guidance to undertake robust data analysis, scenario planning and peer-to-peer learning between local areas. It helps leaders in local authorities use data and evidence to engage the public, improve services, evaluate progress, and fund 'what works.'



**IDEO**



## The Opportunity

Transforming the homelessness sector to become more evidence informed will require action in three strategic areas:

1. Establishing better data foundations;
2. Creating a more extensive body of evidence to enhance our understanding of what works; and
3. Strengthening the sector's capability to act on robust insight.

By participating in the What Works Community: Local Government initiative, you will be at the forefront of this transformation.

The programme offers a range of support opportunities, including:

**Open Community:** A peer-led collective of public sector changemakers, exploring data and evidence-driven approaches through tools, templates, events and facilitated networking.

**Evidence Surgeries and Workshops:** Bespoke support in the form bite-size evidence surgery sessions, where we offer one-to-one impartial advice on specific data and evidence challenges, and our tailored local authority workshops aimed at facilitating focused discussions to guide and help progress local action that has lasting impact.

**Trials:** The opportunity to take part in empirical studies alongside other LAs with similar challenges.

**Evidence Accelerator:** An intensive 6-month, expert-led learning journey for selected local authorities aimed at building a data and evidence culture across an entire organization by working with leaders and core teams in local authorities.



## How does it work?

The 2020 cohort launches in October and runs until June 2021. Membership is free of charge and, while we ask participating local authorities to commit to the initiative at leadership and operational levels, there is no minimum time or resource commitment to become part of the community. Members will also have the opportunity to take part in focused initiatives as part of the programme, with varying levels of time commitment from their teams – from a few hours per month, up to dedicated team sprints as part of the evidence accelerator.

As we adjust to new ways of working following the COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of the programme will be run online and remotely: through group conference calls, hands-on online workshops, or self-directed, downloadable activities and resources.

In addition to the resources and support participants will receive throughout the programme, members are encouraged to share insights and learn from the successes and challenges of other members of the community. We have much to learn from each other, and we believe a peer-support approach will have a multiplying effect on our collective impact



## How to join

Submit your expression of interest to join the initiative today to become one of the 30 local authorities to participate! The Centre team will review submissions to determine which programme options make sense for your local authority and will follow up to gather additional information.

Whatever your challenges, we will prioritise applications that demonstrate a burning desire to build a 'what works' culture. Commitment from staff and leadership and a demonstrated interest in What Works Community concepts are critical to driving change that is truly transformative over the long-term. To participate in the program:

- Submit your (short) [expression of interest](#) by 11:59pm on Friday 16th October 2020 (deadline extended)
- Participate in a diagnostic process with the Centre team
- Select potential supports based on diagnosed needs
- Start your programme end of October 2020



Teams from East Ayrshire, Southend-on-Sea and Pembrokeshire participated in the pilot of the What Works Community in 2019-2020.

Register your interest at:  
[homelessnessimpact.org/community](https://homelessnessimpact.org/community)